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STUDIES IN GENESIS

FELIX VALENTINE HANSON

Carl G. Lundberg

Moline,

Ill.

1911

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BY

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JAMESTOWN, N. Y.

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TO

JOSEPHINE

MY WIFE

Preface.

You are holding in your hand a good book by a good man. What more can you expect? The Rev. Felix V. Hanson of Jamestown, New York, has devoted the spare moments of a strenuous ministerial career to Biblical studies from archæological, historical and chronological points of view, and the result is this volume. It is a most instructive treatise upon the first book of the Bible and is happily adapted for both home-reading and Bible-class work in the Sunday school. The illustrations and practical applications are chosen with a sense of delicacy and fitness. The volume will commend itself to all, who are interested in Biblical lore. And furthermore it is the product of one of our own earnest, scholarly and devoted ministers, a true friend of old and young alike, a splendid Brother, who by this book wishes to serve his master and his fellow men.

First Lutheran Church, Jamestown, N. Y.

JULIUS LINCOLN, D. D.

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Introduction.

Genesis is a marvelous book. In it God lifts the veil and we see time spring from eternity. We behold the creation of the heavens and the earth. We see the earth in its primeval wasteness and emptiness, and then we see the glories of the universe added one after another, until the earth is made ready for life. Genesis therefore brings us back to the beginning and explains the origin of things in God. It unfolds the great moral fact of the race and announces the hope of salvation through a coming Redeemer. This book begins with the promise of a Redeemer and its whole purpose is to show the progress of the preparation for his coming. It shows us God at work among mankind in the past, how he works with the individual and the family and then with the nations. Now God deals with the world through the church of Jesus Christ.

A few of the interesting facts of Genesis are briefly given.

First. Genesis is divided into eleven great natural chapters.

1. The Beginning, Ch. 1: 1—2: 3.
2. The Generations of the Heavens and the Earth, Ch. 2: 4; 4: 26.
3. The Book of the Generations of Adam, Ch. 5: 1; 6: 8.
4. The Generations of Noah, Ch. 6: 9; 9: 29.
5. Generations of the Sons of Noah, Ch. 10: 1; 11: 9.
6. Generations of the Sons of Shem, Ch. 11: 10—26.
7. Generations of the Sons of Terah, Ch. 11: 27; 25: 11.
8. The Generations of the Sons of Ishmael, Ch. 25: 12—18.
9. Generations of the Sons of Isaac, Ch. 25: 19; 35: 29.
10. Generations of the Sons of Esau, Ch. 36: 1; 37: 1.
11. Generations of the Sons of Jacob, Ch. 37: 2; 50: 26.

Second. There is a distinct and consistent method and plan. Moses sets out with the creation of all things and concludes by showing us the chosen people with which the rest of the old Testament is to be concerned, resting in Egypt.

Third. Genesis is the series of genealogy arranged so as to form a continuous and deeply interesting story. Each genealogy is completed before the next begins.

Fourth. Moses tells the story with a purpose. Three-fourths of Genesis is devoted to the story of three men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To these men a promise is given of the seed in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed and these men are the founders of the people whose mission it is to become the channel of salvation to the whole earth.

Fifth. We see in Genesis a series of selections. Seth and his descendants are selected. Every other branch perished in the deluge but that of Seth which was contained in Noah and his sons. Shem is next selected and the reason is given in Chapter 9: 26. Terah is selected, Chapter 11: 27. This one house is alone singled out from among the Semites. In this family is found Abraham (the friend of God). Ishmael is set aside and Isaac is chosen. Esau is set aside and Jacob chosen, and the last fourteen chapters of Genesis tell us of the generations of Jacob. This line leads us on down the ages until at last we come to Bethlehem and Calvary.

Sixth. The rejected line is always named first. Cain's posterity is placed before the posterity of Seth. Ishmael's before Isaac's; Esau's before Jacob's, the chosen have to wait. There is discipline in that which they must not miss, for without it they cannot possess worthily.

Seventh. Every new insight into astronomy, geology, philology, and ethnology, brings proof as to the truth of the records and shows that the pen of Moses was guided by divine wisdom.

The Plan of Genesis.

CHAPTER I.

Genesis 1.

CONTENTS—Creation—Day—Traditions—N. T. Hints—Ill.

In the first chapter of Genesis Moses gives us, in a practical form, the history of creation,—necessary for the subsequent religious instruction.

In the beginning—"God"—how sublime are not the beginning words of Moses! Cuvier, the naturalist, said: "A more sublime sentence than this has never and will never be written by the pen of man." Moses does not try to prove the existence of God. No one in Moses time doubted the existence of God. Moses begins with God and ends with creation. Many scientists begin with creation and end ?—an unkown force or possibly—"God".

God is not created. He Was, or Is. Comté says: "Atheism is the most unreasonable of all doctrines." The scripture puts it "The fool hath said in his heart 'There is no God.'" Professor Dana, the great geologist, writes of the first chapter of Genesis: "It displays purpose in the author of the document and knowledge beyond that of ancient or any time and philosophy more than human. The sacred volume manifests its divine origin in its accordance with the latest readings of nature." The Bible solution of creation respects the

right, and the existence of God. Pantheism buries him in moral filth. Materialism denies him outright. The Bible doctrine of creation not only protects the supremacy and personality of God, but sheds light upon his nature and character.

We learn from Genesis that life can come only from God. Science tells us that life without pre-existing life is unknown. In the spiritual world there is no spiritual life except from God.

Without going into detail we will briefly point out the marvelous agreement between Scripture and science.

1. The creation of matter.
2. Material universe formed of the same matter.
3. The introduction of energy. Gen. 1: 2.
4. The creation of life.
5. The creation of the expanse. (Great ocean of ether).
6. Separation in our earth of dry land and water.
7. Period of vegetation, previous to the introduction of life.
8. Creation of heavenly bodies.
9. Marine life.
10. Reptilian life.
11. Bird life.
12. Cattle, animal life.
13. Man.
14. Cessation of the creative work.

There should be nothing more required to prove to us the divine origin of Genesis.

DAY.

The day of Genesis.

Day is used in the scripture in a three fold manner.

1. In the fifth verse "light" is called day.
2. In the same verse "day" means evening and morning.

3. Genesis 2 : 4. All creation is called day. "In the day God made the earth and the heavens." The Hebrew word "yom" is very seldom used in scripture to denote a day or twenty-four hours. When twenty-four hours are meant the scripture uses "day and night" or "evening and morning". The scripture use of "yom" usually refers to a long indefinite period. Genesis 2 : 4. "The day the Lord made the earth and the heavens." Exodus 13 : 8 referring to many hundred years. Deut. 9 : 1. Happened three months later. Deut. 31 : 16—18. Long duration of time. Isaiah 19 : 18—24; Jer. 46 : 10; Ezek. 30 : 3; Amos 5 : 18; Joel 2 : 1. See also John 8 : 56; II Cor. 6 : 2.

According to Sir W. J. Dawson, the following are the lengths of the days or periods of Genesis:

First day, four and a half million years.
Second day, half a million years.
Third day, three and half million years.
Fourth day, one and a half million years.
Fifth day, nine million years.
Sixth day, one million years.
Seventh day, beginning with the creation of man, seven thousand years.

TRADTIONS.

1. Periods of creation.
   a. Persian mythology speaks of six creative periods of one thousand years each.
   b. Egyptian mythology tells us that the world has undergone many revolutions.
   c. The Hindoo mythology speaks of long creative periods.
2. Creation.

The history of creation is found in the literature of Babylon

and of other countries. The so-called Chaldean Genesis tells the story of creation and of the deluge. Extracts from this story are here given: "When on high the heavens proclaimed not, and the earth beneath recorded not a name. Then the abyss of waters was in the beginning their generator. The chaos of the deep "Tiamat" was she who bore them all. The plant was ungathered; the herb ungrown."

The mass of water is in Hebrew called "Tihom". In Assyrian, "Tiamat." She is the goddess against whom Bel wages war and slays: "He took one-half of her and made it the covering of the sky. He measured the circumferences of the deep; he established a great building called E-Sarra, the 'firmament'."

"At that time the gods in their assembly created the beasts; they made the living creatures, the beasts of the field, the animals of the field and the reptiles of the field."

In one of the Vedic hymns we read the following: "In the beginning there was neither nought nor aught; neither sky nor atmosphere above; only the "existent One" breathed calmly and self-contained."

Similar traditions were possessed by the Greeks and the Romans.

There must at some time have been a revelation when heaven spoke with earth, or how else explain the creative story and the tradition.

N. T. HINTS.

1 Thes. 5: 5.
Hebr. 11: 3.
John 1: 4.

ILL.

Science. Hasty generalisations from. In the year 1798 Bonaparte, with his army, entered the town of Denderah, in Central Egypt. There he found two interesting and seem-

ingly ancient temples. From one of them—the smaller—the roof, carved with certain figures, was carefully taken down and carried to Paris. When examined there by learned men, it was found to be what is technically termed a zodiac, and from certain marks they inferred that it was at least seventeen thousand years old. Soon after this discovery, and under its influence, a professor in the University of Breslau wrote a book with the title, "An Invincible Proof that the world is at least Ten Times Older than Moses supposed when he wrote the Book of Genesis." Many believers in the Bible were very much startled by this discovery, and for a time they were in much fear of mind. But some time later Champollion discovered the method of reading such inscriptions as were found on this zodiac; when he carefully examined it he discovered among other things, the name of Augustus Cæsar inscribed upon it, proving that it was no older than the Christian era.—PATERSON.

God, where found. When one asked where God was before heaven was created, St. Augustine answered, "He was in himself." When another asked me the same question I said, "He was building hell for such idle, presumptuous, fluttering and inquisitive spirits as you."—LUTHER.

CHAPTER II.

Genesis 2.

Man—Sabbath—Paradise—Traditions—N. T. Hints—Ill.

There is no new creation story in the second chapter of Genesis. There is merely a brief reference to the conditions under which vegetation began, next fresh details as to the creation of man and woman, and then the great drama of human existence proceeds upon its way. We will look in vain

in this chapter for an account "of the creation of the heavens and the earth."

The Hebrew "toledoth"—generations—always refers to what comes after. Thus the generations of the sons of Noah speak of their children and of the families which sprang from them; the generations of Shem speak only of the descendants of Shem; the generations of Terah speak also of his children. In this sense we must also understand the fourth verse of this chapter. "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth." There is therefore no new account of creation in this chapter.

MAN.

The creation of man is referred to three times in the first five chapters of Genesis.

"Let us make man"—"in our image"—God is essentially a personal being and in giving to man an immortal soul he gave him also a true personality, self-consciousness, power of free choice, and so a distinct moral responsibility. Man was to be a being who could realize a creator and who could worship him. In creation man received two gifts, marriage and the Sabbath — the foundations of the state and church.

A trinity in man is also indicated in his creation. "Our image"—"our likeness." Paul says in 1 Thes. 5: 23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly that your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." What the body is we know—"soul"—as used in scripture covers all endowment of mind and feeling and will, which the believer and unbeliever alike possess. The conscious possession of the—"spirit"—distinguishes the regenerate from the unregenerate.

Woman. God awakens in Adam a recognition of his want. The beasts and the birds are brought before him, "To see what

he would call them,"—comparative philology has long since perceived that ancient names of animals are the result of keen appreciation of the distinguishing characteristics of each living thing—. In viewing this animal creation man realizes that there was no second self for him, so woman is brought into existence. This second life is the compliment of his own. The scripture teaches us to see in this story the prophecy of the "last Adam", "the second man", "the Lord from heaven and his bride", "the church". She too is the fruit of suffering, taken from the Redeemer's pierced side, she is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh and is his forever. Matthew Henry said, "Woman was taken out of man, not out of his head to top him, nor out of his feet to be trampled under foot, but out of his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."

The Bible has presented in the first two chapters what it has taken scientists thousands of years, without the Bible, to learn. The vast periods of antiquity for man's history are being abandoned. Both geology and archæology combine to give shorter periods.

Darwinism is being abandoned. It was never universally accepted by scientists. It was opposed in France by some of the very greatest scientific authorities from the first, and more so now than formerly. In Germany the tide rose in its favor up to 1890, from that time it has been steadily going back. Darwinism has not been able to stand the test of scientific research, and now, in Germany Darwinism is dying. The result says Prof. Edward Hoppe (Der moderne Evoltionismus, Leipzig 1903). That some are renouncing evolution altogether, others who cannot surrender the principles of evolution have recourse to a power of second hand—a force outside the world of sensible perceptions, and some have at last the courage, without more ado, to designate this power by the usual

name—God—. This same Prof. Hoppe says, "Evolution should be dropped from scientific discussion. Prof. Edw. Hull of England (geologist) says, "It seems to me that geology raises enormous difficulties against the acceptance of any theory of evolution. Dr. Müller (die Natur) writes, "It was a great idea with Darwin to try to bring one type from the other, but just a glance at the fossil remains left us from the different creative periods is sufficient to destroy this empty theory." Mr. Wilser (Naturalist) said at the scientific congress in Germany 1897, "He is no scientist who has not made up his affair with Darwinism."

Man is named as God's last work after the three-fold land life appeared, and God pronounced it good. This is in full accord with science. Man is the last link in the visible creation, "Man was formed after the other animals and that by his advent he crowned the edifice of animal creation."

SABBATH.

Moses recorded the end of the former days or periods but not the seventh day, because this day is not yet ended. We are living in God's Sabbath and in our little sphere we are to imitate God in his larger sphere (Ex. 20: 11). God worked through those six creative periods and rested on the seventh —and when the seventh comes to an end, God's work will begin again, and he will create the new heaven and the new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness." The Sabbath is an argument for "period" of creative days. The argument is not—God labored six days and rested on the seventh, therefore thou shalt do likewise. There is in this no moral or religious obligation—the argument is: God created the world in six of his days and rested on the seventh, and invited man in Eden to share this seventh day rest with him. Through the fall, man lost the rest of God, and the week day is given

him as a memory of the rest he lost on acocunt of sin, and as an assurance of the fulfillment of the promise of God, of the rest in Christ, "the rest that remaineth to the children of God."

After the ascension of our Lord, the first day of the week was observed by the disciples, in memory of the resurrection of our Lord, and of the pouring out of the Spirit. In Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 16: 2, the first day is observed by the Christians. In Rev. 1: 10, the first day is called "the Lord's day". Paul tells us also in Gal. 4: 10; Col. 2: 16—17, that the Jewish Sabbath is not binding to the Christian.

PARADISE.

Many claims have been presented locating Paradise in Europe, America and various other countries. According to Frederick Delitzsch (professor of Assyrian, Leipzig) Babylonia was the home of Paradise, but he cannot account for the river Pison and Gihon.

What does the scripture tell us.

1. Eden was not paradise.
   God planted a garden eastward in Eden.
2. Eden was comparatively high land.
   A river went out from Eden and watered the garden, then dividing into four rivers.
3. Eden was not in itself beautiful or fruitful.
   There would otherwise have been no need of God planting a garden, or no hardship in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden.
4. Eden was a comparatively cold country.
   God made coats of skin for Adam and Eve and clothed them. Gen. 3: 21.

Lenormant says, that Eden in the Accadian and Sumerian texts is used to designate the "plain" in opposition to the

mountain—an elevated plain or plateau—and here a plateau in which the Tigris and Euphrates and two other rivers take their rise. This Eden is found in the region of Armenia, where the Tigris and the Euphrates take their rise. Two other rivers take their rise here also, namely the Kur and the Araxes.

1. Tradition points to this plateau which was known to the ancients.

2. The human form attains here its highest development.

3. Wheat is here indigenous.

4. Armenia is the native home of our domestic animals.

5. The land is suitable only for pasture. This may in a measure explain why Cain's offering was not acceptable and Abel's offering acceptable to God. Abel submits and follows the manner of life for which the plateau was fitted. "He was a keeper of sheep." Cain would not submit. He would restore by his own skill and toil what God had taken away and he becomes "a tiller of the ground."

TRADITIONS.

1. Creation of man.

In the sixth tablet of Chaldean creation story we read the following:

"Marduk opened his mouth and unto Ea he spoke
That which he had conceived in his heart.
My blood will I take and bone will I — — —
I will make man, that man may — — —
I will create man who shall inhabit — — —
That the service of the Gods may be established
And that shrines may be built."

2. The Greeks called themselves Autochthones — Autos, meaning self, and Chthon, meaning land. Man sprung from the ground. (see Gen. 2: 7).

3. The Egyptians say: "The fertilizing mud left by the Nile exposed to the heat of the sun's rays brought forth germs which sprang up as the bodies of men.

4. Peru — the first man is called Alpa Camasca — animated earth.

5. Among the tribes of North American Indians the great spirit molded two figures of clay, and then gave life. The one he called first man, the other one he called companion. (Gen. 2: 20—22).

TRADITIONS OF PARADISE.

Life in paradise was one of joy and simplicity and must have left its mark in the memory of the race, and so it has. Traditions of paradise are found everywhere.

1. Arab legends tell of a garden in the east — this same tradition is found in India.

2. The Chinese tell us of enchanted gardens.

3. Hesiod writes, "Like Gods they lived with calm, untroubled mind. Free from the toil and anguish of their kind."

4. Ovid:

"The Golden age was first when man yet new
No other rule but uncorrupted reason knew
And with a native bent did good pursue."

5. The golden age of the Egyptians was during the ter restial reign of the God "Ra."

6. A fragment of an ancient Accadian hymn speaks of a stalk or vine, its foliage the couch of the primeval mother.

TRADITIONS OF THE TREE OF LIFE.

1. The Iambu tree, of Indian mythology, grew in the sacred grove, its fruit fed the waters of the Iambu River, and all who drank the water became immortal.

2. The Yggdrasil of Norse mythology — the sacred ash — under its root is found the Urdar fount, the life giving water.

3. The Grecian mythology tells of a garden kept by the Hesperides — three sisters. In this garden grew a tree which bore golden apples.

4. Persian tradition tells of the Haoma, the tree of life. The sacred juice of the Haoma is called the Yacna — that which banishes death.

Representations of the tree are found on monuments of all kinds, has releifs, paintings, and Babylonian cylinders. We find thus that a remembrance of paradise and the tree has lived in every branch of the human family.

N. T. HINTS.

Man:
Eph. 5: 23—33.
1 Cor. 11: 8—12.

Sabbath:
Mark. 16: 1—2.
Luke 24: 1.
Acts. 20: 7.
1 Cor. 16: 2.

Paradise:
Rev. 22: 1—2.

ILL.

Descent of Man. The subject of a conversation at which Carlyle was present, but took no part, was the theory of evolution. At length a pause occurring, Carlyle emphatically and with solemnity observed, "Gentlemen, you are well pleased to trace your descent from a tad-pole and an ape, but I would say with David, "Lord, thou hast made me but a little lower than the angels."

Man, Fallen and Restored. Michael Angelo carved his cel-

ebrated statue of David from a block of marble which had received so deep an indentation as to be quite unserviceable under a less daring chisel. So Christ deals with humanity. No other hand but his could shape the saints, who is to stand faultless at last before the presence of the glory of God, out of man as we see Him in the world around us.

Sabbath. A Syrian convert to Christianity was urged by his employer to work on Sunday, but he declined. But said the master, "Does not your Bible say that 'If a man has an ox or an ass that falls into a pit on the Sabbath day, he may pull him out?' 'Yes,' answered the convert; 'but if the ass has a habit of falling into the same pit every Sabbath day, then the man should either fill up the pit or sell the ass.'"

Sabbath appointed of God. The governor Turnusrupis once asked Rabbi Akiba, "What is this day you call the Sabbath more than any other day?" The Rabbi responded, "What art thou more than any other person?" "I am superior to others, "he replied "because the Emperor has appointed me governor over them." Then said Akiba, "The Lord our God who is greater than your Emperor, has appointed the Sabbath day to be holier than the other days."—Talmud.

CHAPTER III.

Genesis 3.

Temptation—Fall—Serpent—Judgment—Trees of the Garden—Traditions—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Adam was submitted to probation. The word unfortunately translated "tempt" means "to test." God tempts no one, "But he does submit Man to trial and to proving, "Deut. 8: 2—3. Created in the image of Gad man was left free to act. It could not have been otherwise and man remain a creation

worthy of Gods purposes. If unable to choose right or wrong man would have been like the animals. The right use of free will makes the Saint, the wrong use of free will makes a Devil.

Satan is permitted to sift the first of humanity as wheat, just as he afterwards sifted the little band of desciples. when the chief of the Apostles fell. Jesus himself, was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, (Math. 4: 1).

The woman quoted law to the Serpent. Gen. 3: 3. Satan meets the law with two assertions. First: The law is a lie — "Ye shall not surely die." Second: There is an advantage in sin "your eyes shall be opened." This is the history of Satans actions from that day to this — to dull the moral sense and to paint sin in attractive colors. Eves mistake consisted in — first — she did not observe the point of the temptation and allowed herself to be drawn into an argument with Satan — second — she made the prohibition stronger than it really was and made it appear, even to her, as too strict, "neither shall ye touch it" — third — at the same time she weakened the prohibition by reducing it to the lesser caution — "lest ye die." God said: "Ye shall surely die."

The sin of taking the fruit seems a small matter. But the gravity of a spiritual act does not depend on the importance of the material thing which leads to it. "The tearing down of a piece of bunting may constitute treason just as truly as the surrender of a fleet." The act of taking and eating the fruit involved many things:

1. Belief in Gods character.
2. Belief in His veracity.
3. Belief in the superiority of Satan to God.
4. It affected the very position of God as supreme — for if He was not good and true He could not be God.

The temptation was the same threefold temptation present-

ed to the Saviour as recorded in Luke 4: 1—13. It was the threefold classification of sin as recorded by John:

1. The lust of the flesh, "the tree was good for food."
2. Lust of the eyes, "delight to the eyes."
3. Pride of life, "desired to make one wise."

The fall involved the whole being of man:

1. Spiritual: discontent with his state.
2. Psychical: mind accepting a false religion.
3. Physical: the act of taking and eating.

Man fell to:

1. Spiritual death.
2. Bodily sickness and death.
3. Guilt.
4. A state of punishment and death.
5. The defilement and injury of the whole race.

Sin in the root carries sin into the branches. Adam was the root we are the branches. Adam fell into sin. We are born to it, or as the Scientist would put it, "born with criminal tendencies," which is the same thing.

PUNISHMENT.

God walks in the Garden — in "the cool of the day." At that time man is in a state more susceptible of serious impressions. When they heard God in the Garden, they hid themselves. "Sin makes cowards of us all." Robbed of his manhood Adam lays the blame on Eve. Eve lays the blame on the serpent. From that day to this man has been laying the burden of guilt upon every handy victim, thinking thereby to deceive even God himself.

"God walks in the Garden." Man was made to know God. Only in this way could truth and love, which embraced the whole creation become the possession of mans soul. God in Christ walked with the fishermen of Galilee. "Sin has ban-

ished love and trust, and in its place we find flight and fear." The hope of restoration lies in this: Man must return and speak with his Maker.

JUDGMENT FALLS.

I. Upon the serpent. — Whether or not it was the serpent as we know it is a question. This animal "was more subtle than any beasts of the field." It seems that its present form was given it as punishment. "Upon thy belly shalt thou go." Many believe that the serpent did not originally have the inferior form and motion of the worm, but that its motion was wholly transformed and changed. The eating of dust does not denote the exclusive food of the serpent, but only the involuntary consequences of its winding in the dust (Micah 7: 17; Isaiah 65: 25). The Scripture is clear on one point: it was Satan that animated the serpent.

2. Enmity between Satan and the woman, "his seed and her seed." This enmity is noted throughout the Bible:

Cain—Abel.
Race of Cain—race of Seth.
Isaac—Ishmael.
Jacob—Esau.
Israel—Nations.
Christ—World.

3. Woman.

"Greatly multiply thy sorrow." "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children — thy desire — to thy husband — he shall rule over thee."

4. Adam.

"Cursed be the ground for thy sake — thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." — "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

Labor is not punishment for sin. We have seen God at

work. Adam was placed in the Garden to till it, before he fell. Listless retirement was not the state of Paradise. Eden brought the toil that was a blessing, sin brought the toil that was a burden.

Thorns and thistles. — This curse upon the earth is verified by science. Sir W. J. Dawson says: "These weeds are not found before the human period, and in whatever region man tills the soil they spring up among the fruits of his labor.

One bright light is found in this dark chapter — the promise of a Redeemer.

5. Trees of the Garden.

Tree — not of knowledge — but "of knowledge of Good and Evil," and it was such a tree, by its being a test of character and action. There are two ways of knowing good and evil:

1. Satan's way: By experience.

2. The Divine way: By knowing good by experience and evil by contrast.

"The forbidden tree stands in every paradise of virtue and enjoyment."

The tree of knowledge stood for sin, and the turning from it, for repentance. —

The tree of Life represents Christ in the Gospel, and the eating of it — faith in Christ. "Adam's Gospel was therefore the same as ours." They were permitted to eat of this tree. Gen. 2: 17. They neglected to eat of this tree and so fell. — Our neglect in eating of the tree of life (Christ) is the cause of our weakness and why we are so easily tempted by Satan.

No doubt the tree of life possessed medicinal qualities to keep the body from decaying with age. (Tree of life, guarded by winged figures, have been found on Assyrian monuments.)

By the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" the Rabbins and the Mohammedans understood — "the vine."

The Greek Church — "the fig tree."

The Latin Church — "the apple tree."

In all probability it was "the vine." Noah became intoxicated by the fruit of the vine and in consequence thereof lay in his nakedness. — Adam falls into sin and becomes aware of his nakedness, after eating of the forbidden fruit.

6. Traditions.

The Tibetans tell of a sweet whitish herb or marrow from the enjoyment of which originated the feeling of shame and the custom of wearing clothes.

Greek — Hercules possessed himself of the golden apple of the Hesperides, which the serpent guarded.

Phoenecian — Of the wind Colpias and his spouse Baau were born Protogonous and Aeon. And Aeon found out how to eat of the tree. Colpias — "Kol — voice — and "Piah" breath "the voice of the breath." Protogonous — "first born" (Adam) "Aeon" "who found how to eat the fruit of the tree"—(Eve).

Norse:

The golden age lasted until the arrival of the woman out of Jotunheim, who corrupted it.

The old classic fable regarding Pandora tells the same story. Pandora opens the closed Jar, — which was not to be opened — and all the evils incident to man poured out. She shuts down the lid, and prevents the escape of "Hope."

The Babylonian story:

"In sin one with another in compact joins
The command was established in the garden of the gods."
The Ansan tree they ate — they brake in two.
Its stalk they distroyed.
The sweet juice which injures the body.
Great is their sin — themselves they exalted.
To Merodack their Redeemer hé (the god Sar) appointed their fate."

Traditions concerning the serpent:

The worship of the serpent is found among many peoples, the Aryan — Semitic — and Turanian. What has caused this animal to stand out beyond every other animal, and to gather round it the fear and reverence of universal man? In Gen. 3 the answer is found.

Egypt — The serpent Apap fights against the sun, and whom Hor destroys with his weapon.

Chaldean — The serpent Anib-Ilani is called the enemy of the gods.

Zoroastrian — The great serpent Angromainyas fights Mithra the god of the pure sky. Under this form he will one day be overcome and chained for three thousand years, and at the end of the world be burned in liquifying metals.

N. T. HINTS:

Romans 5: 12.

Col. 3: 16.

John 17: 3

ILL.

Deadliness of sin.

The blossoms of the Judas tree appear before the leaves, and they are of brilliant crimson, the flaming beauty of the flowers attracts innumerable insects; and the wandering bee is drawn to it to gather honey. But every bee that alights upon the blossoms imbibes a fatal poison, and drops dead. Beneath this enticing tree the earth is strewn with the victims of its fatal fascination.

Sin and forgiveness.

Mr. French quoted a saying of old Fullers — "He that falls into sin is a man; he that grieves at sin is a saint; he that boasts of sin is a devil." Rev. Marsh replied, "Only one thing more: He that forgives it is God."

CHAPTER IV.

Genesis 4.

Cain and Abel—Sacrifice—Murder—Punishment—Population—Traditions—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Eve called her first son Cain. The word according to Schrader comes from the Sumiro Accadian language and means shoot, sprout or offspring. This meaning explains Eve's word "I have gotten a man even Jehovah." She believed that Cain was the promised seed who should avenge her wrong and take away the fruits of her sin and that Cain would regain paradise and restore the lost fellowship with God.

Abel. Abel does not mean breath — so called on account of the shortness of his life — for he had this name from his birth, and Eve did not know how long he would live. The word is found in the Assyrian and means son. It appears in many names, as for instance Assurbanipal — or Asur-bani-abel. —"Asure created the Son.—"

Offering. The acceptance of Abel's offer and the rejection of Cain's offer depended upon the disposition and state of heart and faith of him who offered. (Hebr. 11: 4). The two altars show that not all worship is acceptable to God. God honors that which is founded upon the principles of atonement and exhibits the right spirit — the spirit of humility. Mere forms are nothing, God looks to the heart. (v. 5). The central difference of their offering was in the heart and character of the person who made the offering. Abel's offering of burnt sacrifice expressed sorrow for sin, repentance and a prayer for forgiveness; while Cain's was a mere formal act of worship without repentance or faith in God. We see here in this first family, what we see in many families — two sons brought up in the same environment of circum-

stances and training, yet different in character; one godly, the other godless, one religious, the other wicked.

MURDER.

Cain became angry at Abel and "finally rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him." — Sin begets sin — hatred is murder says Jesus — sin always strikes a blow at innocence and godness. Sin has a genesis, a birth, a growth, a penalty and a suffering. Here hatred dyes its passionate hand in a brother's blood. But how different sin looks before the deed and after. If we could but see sin beforehand with all its hideousness in which we see it afterwards, few of us would do wrong.

PUNISHMENT.

Cain was not alone. The eye of God was upon him and he is brought to trial. Daniel Webster, in a murder trial once said, "He had done murder, no eye had seen him, no ear had heard him. The secret is his own and it is safe — ah, what a dreadful mistake. Such a secret can be safe nowhere. The whole creation of God has neither nook nor corner where the guilty can bestow it and say it is safe." "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."

Cursed from the earth. The restlessness of the murderer, his inability to endure the companionship of simple husbandmen, and their life, renders it impossible for him to till the soil successfully, and makes him a rover, a fugitive and a vagabond. The family of Cain devote themselves to other arts. (vs. 20—22).

Mark. Whether God imparts a sign to Cain or gave Cain a sign assuring him of inviolability is a question we cannot answer. Rabbi Nehemiah says: "God caused leprosy to

break out on Cain's forehead, so that it might be seen that he was already sufficiently punished. "And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord."

POPULATION.

From Gen. 4: 25 it would seem that the murder of Abel took place just before the birth of Seth, and Seth was born 130 years after the creation of man. Cain and Abel were then from 125 to 130 years of age at the time of the murder. There were then a great number of people on earth besides the parents and their two children. We are not to assume that between Cain and Abel and Seth or even between these two boys there were not others. The Bible is not a history of the race. Its aim is to distinguish what is vitally related to its dominant purpose. Cain's complaint (v. 14) indicates that there was quite a population at that time. An old tradition says that Cain and Abel had respectively twin sisters, and that the twin of Cain became the bride of Abel and the twin of Abel the bride of Cain. — There could have easily been half a million people had their children married as early as in modern times. In Saurins "Desertations" it is stated that at the death of Abel (125) there might have been over 32,000 persons descended from eight children of Cain and Abel, or about 400,000 in all. An authentic account is given of an Englishman named Pine who was in the year 1589 by a shipwreck, thrown with four females upon a deserted island southeast of the Cape of Good Hope, and whose descendants had after 78 years (1667) increased to more than 11,000 souls.

Cain took his wife and family, and grandchildren and possibly great grandchildren with him and "went to the land of Nod." Boscawen says, that the land of Nod is the name Nadu found in Babylonian inscriptions and means "the

land of the wanderer." Of the city Enoch, he says, "It is the old Sumerian name Unug or Unuk — and is the Uruk (Erek) of the Semitic Babylonian form of the word for city, and especially for Nimrod's capital city.

TRADITIONS.

Two things are presented in this story. Cain slays his brother and builds a city. Cain was the founder of the first city. There are some remarkable traditions which bear on this story. Among the Assyrians it was a custom to make their bricks in the third month. An inscription of Sargon reads as follows: "In the month of the royal twins — let bricks be made in order to build a city."

The story of Romulus and Remus, tells of two brothers who quarrel because of the omens granted by the gods. Remus is slain and Romulus builds a city, with hands stained with his brother's blood. The story is found everywhere. Each famous city of the origin of which tradition speaks has human blood poured into its trenches. Murder and city building are bound together — echoes of the story of the fourth chapter of Genesis.

N. T. HINTS.

John 3: 3.
Rom. 5: 12—21.
Hebr. 11: 4.

ILL.

Quarrel, a foolish. An old writer tells of two brothers who went out to take a walk in the night, and one of them looked up to the sky and said, "I wish I had a pasture field as large as the night heavens." And the other brother looked up into the sky and said, "I wish I had as many oxen as there are stars in the sky." "Well," said the first, "how would you

feed so many oxen?" Said the second, "I would turn them into your pasture." "What, whether I would or not!" "Yes, whether you would or not." And there arose a quarrel; and when the quarrel ended one had slain the other.—TALMAGE.

Life, value of. It was said that Admiral Hunter endangered one of his vessels, and a court martial was called to try him. Evidence was given that the vessel had been seriously injured, and he was put upon his defense. His answer was, "Gentlemen, all the evidence you have heard is true; but you have not heard the reason why the vessel was injured. I ordered the vessel to be put about. Why? There was a man overboard, and I hoped to save him; and gentlemen, I deem it that the life of a private sailor in her majesty's navy is worth all the vessels that float upon the seas."

CHAPTER V.

Genesis 5.

Longevity—Enoch—Chronology of the Bible—Traditions—N. T. Hints—Ill.

THE LONGEVITY.

The ages of the ten chiefs are given in this chapter. Enoch, 365, the youngest. Methuselah, the oldest, 969 years, a mighty span of years. Foissac says: "The long life of the patriarchs was a fact more rational, more in accord with the laws of physiology than the brief existence of the men, who people the earth to-day," and Weisman says, "I consider that the duration of life is really dependent upon adaptation to external conditions, that its length whether longer or shorter is governed by the needs of the species. The antideluvian period demanded such a prolongation of existence. Lives of

three score years and ten could not have done the work achieved by the great fathers of our race." Pattison says, "Skeletons found of men before the flood are those of very old men, whose teeth had been worn down to mere stumps by long use."

The number ten meets us everywhere in history and tradition. The Bible speaks of ten great fathers of our race. The Egyptians believed that ten deities reigned before man. The Sybelline books speak of ten ages between the creation and the deluge. The Hindoos speak of nine Brahmidikas who with Brahma, their maker, are called the ten Pitris or fathers. The Scandinavian and German traditions tell of ten ancestors of Odin. The Arabs speak of ten kings. In all this we see a deep impress of the story of Genesis. Again Hamanza gives in the first Persian dynasty three reigns of 500, 746, and 1000 years respectively. The Accadians declared that among them several ancient kings had attained the age of 300 years.

ENOCH.

Enoch walked with God. He should not see death. He forsook the world's ways, he ceased to take his own way and walked with his Creator. Enoch's translation is the type and prophecy of that "gathering unto him," which Christ gives us as our hope to-day.

Belief in immortality is among the earliest possessions of humanity. The laws of Hammurabbi, "contemporary of Abraham," speak of the dead as having "gone to their fate." Life is a preparation for an eternal destiny. The same doctrine is taught in the ancient Egyptian funeral ritual. There was no time, however far back, when man did not believe in God and in life beyond the grave.

Translations recorded in the Bible:

Enoch—The Patriachal Age.
Elijah—The Prophetical Age.
Jesus—The Christian Age.

CHRONOLOGY.

The chronology of the Bible rests solely upon chapters five and eleven of Genesis. From Seth to Noah, from Shem to Abraham. Many different chronologies have been given. The Jews count 3761 from creation of man to Christ. Jackson—5426. Ussher—4004. Berosus, a priest of Bel at Babylon in the third centry B. C., claimed that the first king of Babylon reigned 467,581 before Pul or about 468,330 B. C. This vast space of time was occupied by seven royal dynasties; the average reign of the ten kings before the deluge was 43,200 years each. Manetho, an Egyptian priest about 300 B. C., in his chronology gives 29,925 years.

The evolutionist demands a practically unlimited past for the slow development of the human form, for if 6,000 years show not the slightest change in the structure of the human body an eternity itself would hardly provide a sufficiently extended duration to evolve man from the ape, not to speak of the development of the ape from the nomad.

The first claims of geology were for 240,000 years for the antiquity of man. Experiments recently made show that from 7,000 to 10,000 years from the present time is amply sufficient to cover the period which has elapsed since the close of the ice age and the appearance of man upon the earth.

The Scripture does not intend merely to provide chronological information. One generation is omitted in Genesis 11. See Luke 3: 35—36, where we learn that there were three generations. In Genesis 11, there are only two mentioned. This indicates that there is not merely a genealogical

change, but a series of divine selections and the numbers are confined to the record of these selections. No numbers, however, are given with the descendants of Cain, or of Japhet, or of Ham, or even in the ordinary genealogy of Shem. There is a deeper purpose of Scripture than to merely give us chronology. We are told in Genesis 5: 32 that Noah was 500 years old and begat Shem, Ham, and Japhet. We should then conclude that Shem was the first-born. But Shem was the second son and Japhet the first-born. See chapter 10: 21, "Japhet, the elder." See also chapter 9: 24. But we read again, Shem was 100 years old and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood. (Gen. 11: 10.) But the flood occurred when Noah was 600 years old. If the words "After the flood" mean after the flood began, then Noah was 603 years at the birth of Arphaxad and Shem, if he was really Noah's first-born, was 103 years old and not merely 100 years old. Again we read in Gen. 11: 26: "And Terah lived 70 years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haram." Abram is here ranked as the first-born, but the Scripture informs us immediately afterwards that he was not really, that is reckoning by descent, the first-born. In Gen. 12: 4 we learn that Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran for Canaan, but as it is indicated in the context, and is clearly stated in Acts 7: 4, Abram left Haran after his father's death. Gen. 11: 32. Terah was therefore 130 years and not 70 years old when Abram was born. The explanation is simple. Abram, though not in fact Terah's first-born, is accepted of God and regarded by him as the first-born. In like manner with Shem, though not Noah's first-born, is plainly put by God in the place of the first-born. Now adding the year of the birth of the first-born to the after period of the father's life and dividing the result by two, we reach what we may regard as a likely birth year of him, who, in many cases at least, was possibly, like

David, the youngest of the family. The chronology worked out this way gives the following result:

1.	From Creation of Adam to Deluge	4,413
2.	From Deluge to Birth of Abraham	1,668
3.	Abraham to Birth of Isaac	100
4.	Isaac's Birth to Exodus	400
5.	Exodus to Building of Temple	573
6.	Fourth Year of Solomon to Christ	1,012
7.	Christ to Present Time	1,910
	The probable total duration of man's existence on earth to the year of grace 1910	10,076

The deluge, therefore, occurred 3,733 before the birth of Christ. — See Urquhart, "How old is man."

N. T. HINTS.

Rom. 5: 14.
Hebrews 11: 5.

ILL.

1. *Shortness of Life.* The old Hebrews, among their many traditions, tell us a story of Methuselah. They say that his great length of life was early made known to him. His friends counselled him to build a substantial house for himself. He refused, saying that it was not worth while building a house at all for such a short time. He realized the shortness of life, not its length; and he looked for "the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

2. *God and Man.* A converted heathen said, "I open my Bible and God talks with me; I close my Bible and then I talk with God."

CHAPTER VI.

Genesis 6.

Conditions before the Deluge—Races of Men—Noah—The Ark—N. T. Hints—Ill.

We are given a short and graphic description of the state of society before the deluge in verses one and five. The passions of men were let loose. The Bible tells us that the "Wickedness of men was great in the earth — and the earth was filled with violence." We find in the Scripture two races of men, namely the race of Cain and the race of Seth. A third race now appears, as a result of the intermarriage of the two races. The third race is the "Nephilim" — the race of giants. Sir J. W. Dawson says, "It is interesting to note here, that in the Post glacial period we find in Europe three races.

1. The Truchere — of which only a single example is at present known; of medium stature, mild features and possibly representing the Sethites.

2. The Canstadt type — coarse, robust, and brutal; and representing the lower type of the Canites.

3. The gigantic Cro — magnon race, attaining sometimes a stature of seven feet, with prodigious muscular power, large brain and coarse massive features."

Polygamy was practiced. "They took them wives of all which they chose." "And God looked upon the earth and behold, it was corrupt." Good and evil mingle — and violence appears. Giants of stature and of cruelty appear. They fill the law-abiding with terror, they become mighty men, "who were in ancient times men of renown."

The names of the men also tell the story of crime. In the time when men began to call upon the name of the Lord (Chap. 4: 26) we note names such as:

Mehujael—purified of God.

Methusael—strengthened of God.

Mahalalel—praise of God.

But towards the time of Noah and after the intermarriage of the sons of God (Sethites) with the daughters of men (Canites) the "El" — God — is dropped and we have the following names:

Lamech—strong youth.

Tubal Cain—lance forger.

Methusaleh—man of arrows—indicating that the earth was being filled with violence.

The government was might. In Job 22: 15—18 a reference is given to the sin of that time.

The tendency of sin is downward: chapter 3 disobedience; chapter 4, passion; chapter 6, uncontrolled wickedness — let him who would escape the last stage avoid the first.

"God looked upon the earth." He was now going to deal with it. Nothing could be urged why judgment should not fall. There was no repentance, no betterment. "All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." God deals with them in patience, and gives 120 years in which to repent, and warns them through Noah who was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2: 5). Nothing avails. So God passes judgment. "I will destroy man."

There is one righteous man, and that is Noah. "He was a just man and perfect in his generation, and "Noah walked with God." This phrase is only applied to Enoch and Noah, and denotes the most confidential intercourse and communion with God. That he was "perfect in his generation" may mean that he was so comparatively to the men that then lived; that he was good in bad times in spite of all evil examples. It is probable that he was of pure descent, that is, different from his contemporaries, who were the offspring of

promiscuous intermarriage between the godly and the ungodly. Majorities are not always right. The majority in Noah's day, in Abraham's day, in Jacob's day, in Luther's day, was wrong, and is wrong in our day. Let us follow our conscience even when it requires us to walk alone.

THE ARK.

Bishop Hall says: "I think I see those monstrous sons of Lamech coming to Noah and asking him what he means by that strange work; whether he meant to sail upon dry land? To whom, when he reports God's purpose and his, they go away laughing at his foolishness and tell one another in sport, that too much holiness hath made him mad. Yet they cannot flout Noah out of his faith; he preaches and builds and finishes. No doubt more hands went to this work than his. Many a one wrought upon the ark, which yet was not saved in the ark." Our outward works cannot save us without our faith. We may help to save others and perish ourselves. Men mocked while Noah was building the ark, but the deluge came; men mock while the word of God is being preached, but the judgment will come.

THE ARK.

The length of a cubic varied from 18 inches to 24 inches. Taking the lower figure, the ark would contain 1,518,750 cubic feet. And if the larger, 3,600,000 feet. This space would yield enormous accommodations for life and food. Prof. Howard Osgood says: "By a simple arithmetical problem it can be shown that all the known species of land animals could easily be contained in the ark. The number of species estimated by naturalists is about 2,415. In the ark were seven each of the 10 species of clean animals, and of all other species, two each, making 4,900 of the land mamalia. Allowing 5 square feet for each animal there would be room

for all 4,900 on a single deck of the ark, and in the ark were 3 such decks, leaving ample room for food, etc." The darkness and the roaring and rocking of the water would bring on a torpor and in the case of many animals, a winter sleep, whereby the feeding would be considerably reduced. God tells Noah that the birds and the beasts "shall come unto thee." It is well known that animals exhibit a presentiment of danger, which has overcome their fear of man, and they often seek an asylum almost in violation of their natural habits.

N. T. HINTS.

Repentance, Mark 1: 4.
Sin, Rom. 5: 12.
Grace, Rom. 4: 16.
Mark 1: 4.
Rom. 5: 12.
Rom. 4: 16.

ILL.

Life of man. Man is born with his hands clenched; he dies with his hands wide open. Entering life he desires to grasp everything; leaving the world, all that he possesses has slipped away. Even as a fox is man — as a fox which, seeing a fine vineyard, lusted after its grapes. But the palings were placed at narrow distances, and the fox was too bulky to creep between them. For three days he fasted, and when he had grown thin he entered into the vineyard. He feasted upon the grapes, forgetful of the morrow, of all things but his enjoyment; and lo! he had again grown stout, and was unable to leave the scene of his feast. So for three days more he fasted, and when he had again grown thin he passed through the palings and stood outside the vineyard, meagre as when he entered. So with man: poor and naked he enters the world; poor and naked does he leave.—Talmud.

CHAPTER VII.

Genesis 7; 8: 1—14.

The Deluge—Universality—Testimony of Geology—Traditions—N. T. Hints—Ill.

A graphic description of the deluge is given in the seventh and eighth chapters. "And they went into the ark" — "and the Lord shut him in" — "and the floods came."

Many theories have been advanced to prove that the flood was local. It is impossible to so understand the story in Genesis. The Bible story indicates its universality. The testimony of geology stands for a universal flood. Upham in the United States, and Hansen of Norway, after thoroughly examining every fact concerning the ice period, came to the conclusion that from a geological point of view the ice period dates from 7,000 to 10,000 years. Urquhart says, "Men of the very foremost ranks in the science of geology now admit almost all, that the believer in the Bible contends for." The accumulated array of facts compel geologists to admit that there has been a wide spread deluge since man appeared upon the earth. The presence of gravel and mud beds are everywhere. They do not lie only along river courses, or on the sides of valleys; they are found on elevations where no river has ever flown. A gravel bed was found on Moel Tryfaen, part of the Snowdon range, 1,390 feet above the level of the sea. This gravel was full of sea shells. How was the gravel deposited on the mountain top? The Duke of Argyll gives this explanation: "This mountain must have at one time been submerged beneath the sea, and that the submergence was only temporary and tumultuous. Gravel beds are found all over Europe. The town of Munich, 1,500 feet above the sea, is surrounded by deep pits of gravel swept down from the Alps. There are many such gravel beds in

the continent of America. The mud beds are as universal as the gravel beds, which by many geologists are called the "diluvial deposits." Stones and boulders, which do not belong to any surrounding strata are found which have been deposited from waters, which at one time suddenly overflowed the whole country as far as the polar sea. The glacial period cannot explain these phenomena. Two fatal objections have been given.

1. Melting icebergs would not separate boulders from gravel or gravel from clay and loam, everything would be precipitated together and the deposits would be of an entirely different character from those which have to be accounted for.

2. A prolonged submergence would have led to the clay and the loam, and the gravel being regularly stratified and solidified like the other rocks which were deposited in that way and which form the earth's crust. (Sir Henry Howarth —Glacial Nightmare and The Flood.)

The concluding testimony of geology is the following: The old race of men ended suddenly and completely everywhere. We trace ancient man up to a certain point, and then he vanishes utterly. The animals with which he shared the earth perish also. They perish in multitudes, old and young together — they perish in the flood. The bones of ancient man, and of the ancient animals are mixed up together, and above these there are no animal remains and no human remains for ages after. New men and new animals appear — the animals and the men whose descendants hold the lands to-day. Sir J. W. Dawson says, "We may sum the whole under the following general statements:

1. Man and land animals are the latest tenants of the earth.

2. The earliest races of men known to geology are separated from the modern world of ordinary history by a great physical cataclysm.

3. We have every reason to believe that the modern races of men are descendants from survivors of these physical changes." And thus we read in the Bible, "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beasts, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth and every man — all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died."

TRADITIONS.

In the year 1872, while George Smith, an employee of the British museum, was engaged in cataloguing the tablets which Layard had found in the ruins of Nineveh, the year 1845, he one day took up a small clay fragment and read the following words: "I released a dove; it flew about, but finding no resting place, returned." They were familiar words, so familiar that their appearance upon the fragments of clay overcame Mr. Smith, for he recognized all that they meant, and he fell senseless to the floor. He had discovered the Babylonian story of the deluge. The excitement at the discovery became so great that the *London Daily Telegraph* gathered funds and sent Mr. Smith to Nineveh to search for the missing fragments of the tablet. In the chamber of the palace of Assurbanipal, where the library was stored, Mr. Smith found the fragments which he most desired. Since then excavators have discovered other copies of the same story, and now the narrative is quite complete. This Babylonian deluage story is the most remarkable of all traditions. Xisuthrus, the tenth antidiluvian king, whose other name is Hasisadra, is the Noah of the Chaldean story: "Enter the ship and close the door of the vessel, bring into it thy corn, thy goods, thy wife, thy slaves, thy sons, thy people, the cattle of the field, the beasts of the field as many as I appoint." In another tablet Xisuthrus describes how he built

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the boat and describes the deluge, and finally the boat resting on the Nizir. "A fifth day and a sixth day did the mountain Nizir hold it. When the seventh day came, I sent forth a dove and let it go. The dove returned — a resting place it found not, and it turned back — I sent forth a raven — the raven went and saw the going down of the waters and it approached, it waded, it croaked, and did not turn back — I offered sacrifice, I built an altar on the summit of the mountain."

The traditions of India and China tell of a great deluge. Manu, the Hindo progenerator of the race, was warned by a fish, and told to build a ship, and to gather all kinds of seeds, and to take with him seven rishis, or holy beings — the floods came and covered the earth.

According to the Chinese tradition, Fuh-he is the author of Chinese civilization. He escaped from a deluge, which destroyed the human race with the exception of himself, wife, three sons, and three daughters, and from these the whole earth was peopled.

The Greek and Roman traditions agree with the Scripture accounts in many points. Deucalion is the Greek hero — he gives birth to a new race — the old race was destrowed on account of their wickedness — himself, wife, children, and animals were saved.

The Mexicans give the flood a very prominent place among their traditions. CoxCox, the hero, saves himself and wife and children by embarking in a boat.

The following is a quotation from Mariette's history of Egypt: "After the reign of Apappus and Nitrocris, which closed the sixth dynasty, a sudden and unforseen check was given to the progress of civilization, and during 436 years — from the sixth to the eleventh dynasty — Egypt seems to have disappeared from the list of nations. When she awoke

from her long sleep, it was to find that her ancient traditions were forgotten. The old family name, titles, and writings, and even the religion itself seemed changed." The deluge may possibly account for this change.

November plays an important part in the history of nations. The Hindoos celebrate their festival of the dead on the 17th day of November. The Persians call November "Mordad" — the angel of death. The first of November was with the Druids a night full of mystery, in which they celebrated the reconstruction of the world. In our calendar we find the first of November marked All Saints' day, the 31st of October, all hallows eve, and the 2nd of November, all souls' day — three days festival of the dead. (Blakes' Astronomical Myths.) We see that the story of the deluge plays an important part in the literature of many people.

N. T. HINTS.

Rom. 8: 31.
Luke 17: 27.
Math. 24: 37.

ILL.

A Quaint Epitaph. The following quaint epitaph has reference to a little girl buried at the age of five months: "But the dove found no rest for the sole of her feet, and she returned unto him into the ark."

CHAPTER VIII.

Genesis 8: 15; 9.

Ararat—Rainbow Covenant—Noah's Children—Blessing and Curse of Noah—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The ark rests on the mountain of Ararat in Armenia. Armenia was the abode of man at his creation. It is now to be

the cradle of the second race. — Armenia is the most peculiar point on the globe, from whose heights the lines and tribes of people, as they went forth from the sons of Noah, might spread themselves to all the regions of the earth.

God tells Noah to leave the ark, which he does, and Noah builds an altar and offers burnt offerings of clean animals. (Ch. 8: 20.) God was pleased with the offering "and said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more, for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." (Ch. 8: 21—22.) God then gives Noah a promise of exemption from flood. "I appoint my bow — it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth" (Ch. 9: 13). God does not now create the rainbow; the rainbow was already a familiar sight — now it becomes a token or sign of a covenant, visible to all nations and intelligible to all minds. Every beautiful rainbow is God's gracious assurance that whatever else might come, such a judgment as this should never again be visited upon the earth. Such a token was necessary to assure guilty and apprehensive humanity that God will no more destroy the earth by floods. The bow is God's pledge and man's assurance. It is appropriate and beautiful as a token. It is formed on the rain itself; it proves that the storm is partial and not covering the whole sky. It can be seen everywhere, and is beautiful and attractive. "It forms an arch, wide as the storm and binding earth and heaven, God and man together in peace."

From hints given in the ninth and tenth chapters we conclude that the order of Noah's children, according to birth, should be Japhet, Shem, and Ham. In Ch. 10: 21 we read:

"Japhet the elder." In the ninth chapter, verse 4 we read: "And when Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his "youngest" son had done unto him." (See chronology in Ch. 5 for explanation as to the order of the children of Noah.)

It is remarkable that this district of Armenia is the home of the vine. Whether Noah was the first winemaker, or was merely repeating one of the practices of the old world, we do not know. As Adam and Eve fell by eating the fruit "of the vine" — so Noah falls by drinking the juice of the vine. How early in human history do we not notice the evils of drunkenness. — It has grown with the world ever since, until now it overtops all other forms of vice, and sends more men to prison, plunges more families in misery, and works more ruin than any other evil.

Two important lessons are brought out in this chapter: the lesson of temperance, and the lesson of honor due parents.

THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE OF NOAH.

Viewed in the light of history, the blessing and curse of Noah are prophetic.

1. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem" (v. 26). Shem is to be the preserver and bearer of true religion. From Shem we have the Jewish and Christian religions.

2. "God shall enlarge Japhet." We have here a play upon the word "Japhet" which signifies enlargement. This the most striking part in the history of Japhet — the expansion of the Japhetic tribes — the Indo-European races. From Siberia to New Zealand Japhet is master. In the words "Japhet shall dwell in the tents of Shem" we have a description of our present day blessings. We dwell now in the tabernacles of Shem. "The writing of the last part of God's revelation in the Greek tongue was the indication that the time for the fulfilment of the promise was come. It was

the opening of the gates, that Japhet might enter "the tabernacles of Shem."

3. "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." The curse falls upon Canaan. The after history helps us to an explanation. We read in Ch. 10: 6: "And the sons of Ham: Erek, Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan." Canaan was Ham's youngest son, and Ham was Noah's youngest son. Ham's sin was reflected in its punishment. The burden upon Canaan was, that he should be "a servant of servants unto his brethren." For long ages the power and glory of Canaan's descendants seem to set the prediction at defiance. The Sidonians were long the merchant princes of the world; and Tyre and Carthage promised to maintain the great inheritance in undiminished splendor. The children of Heth — the Hittites — rivaled the kings of Egypt. But the end came. The Canaanites of Palestine went down under the children of Shem, in the persons of the Israelites; and the Hittites, with the men of Sidon and Tyre, had afterwards to serve the Semitic Assyrians. The conquest was made still more complete under the Japhetic dominion of Persia, Greece, and Rome; the last of which extinguished the glory of Carthage. Since then Shem and Japhet have each had preeminence, and Canaan has had none. (Urquhart.)

N. T. HINTS.

2 Cor. 1: 20.
Luke 21: 34.

ILL.

Prayer of Noah. Tradition has preserved the prayer of Noah: "O Lord, excellent art Thou in Thy truth, and there is nothing great in comparison to Thee. Look upon us with the eye of mercy and compassion; deliver us from this deluge

of waters and set our feet in a large room. By the sorrows of Adam, Thy first-made man, by the blood of Abel, Thy holy one, by the righteousness of Seth, in whom Thou wert well pleased, number us not among those who have transgressed Thy statutes, but take us unto Thy merciful care, for Thou art our Deliverer, and Thine is the praise from all the works of Thy hands for evermore." — And the sons of Noah said: "Amen, Lord."

CHAPTER IX.

Genesis 10.

Table of the Nations—Japhet—Shem—Ham—Nimrod and his Conquests—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The generations of the sons of Noah are given in this chapter. We are informed in v. 32, that "by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood." The Scripture brings out the unity of man. Everything in this chapter is clear and definite. Many have claimed that the Scripture only dealt with the Adamites and their sins, and that their sins were punished by the flood and not the "other" races. Voltaire declared that no one, who was not blind, could doubt that the Whites, the Negroes, the Albinos, the Hottentots, the Chinese, and the Americans belong to entirely different races. Mr. Calhoun, the American minister (on the subject of Negro slavery), answered the remonstrances of the British and French governments by saying that the Negroes were not of the same species as ourselves.

A great deal was once made of the so-called missing links, but Darwin's theory as to the descent of man is being discarded more and more (see Ch. 2). Climate, food, and habit

are now recognized as potent factors in the changes among the races. For example: The French have decreased in height in the islands of Mexico, and the British have grown taller in the western states of America. Arguments for different races have been based upon color, hair, height of body, and size and shape of the skull. Scientists have brought out the following:

1. Color. The same layers are found in white and black. The layers are merely thicker in the Negro. The freckles on the skin of the white present the characteristics of the skin of the Negro.

2. Hair. There is just as much difference in the same "race" as between the different peoples.

3. Height. There are gradations in the height of man from the smallest Esquimaux, 3 feet, 7 inches, to the Schiffer Islanders, 6 feet, 3 inches.

4. Skull. The average capacity of American brain is 96 cubic inches, that of Hottentots 75 inches, a difference of only 15 cubic inches. When we recollect that this lowest is twice the capacity of the highest ape, we realize how impossible is the attempt made by those who would prove the "descent" or the "ascent" of man from ape ancestors .

Sir Charles Lyell and Prof. Huxley distinctly admit that there is nothing in the diversities of the various races inconsistent with the belief that all men have descended from a single pair. That man has sprung from one family, from one home, and from one wedded pair is now regarded as being in complete accord with the results of scientific investigation. Tyler says: "The opinion of modern zoologists, whose study of the species and breeds of animals make them the best judges, is against the view of several origins of man, for two principal reasons: *First,* that all tribes of men, from the blackest to the whitest, the most savage to the most cul-

tured, have such general likeness in the structure of their bodies and the workings of their minds as is easiest and best accounted for by their being descendants from a common ancestry. The *second* reason is that all human races may intermarry. This again points to a common ancestry of all the races of man. (Tyler—Anthropology.)

The Scripture classifies the various families of mankind, and makes a threefold division. Noah's home becomes three homes; and the growth of mankind is the growth of these three families.

Following the indications of language, the threefold division of the Scripture once more appears. These are the Aryan, or Japhetic; the Semitic; the Turanian, or Hamitic.

1. The Aryan includes Sanskrit, Persian, Celtic, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Scandinavian, German, and English. Colonel Vans Kenedy presents 900 words common to the Sanskrit and other languages of the same family, as for example: pader, mader, dokhter, brader, denta (tooth), eyeumen (eyes), sarpan, etc.

2. The Semitic is marked by verbal and grammatical characteristics, embracing Hebrew, Assyrian, Babylonian, Arabic, Syrian, and Ethiopian.

3. The Turanian comprises all the languages spoken in Asia and Europe, not included under the Aryan or Semitic. Asia bears to-day a silent testimony to the truth of the Scripture. It is still inhabited by representatives of the three great divisions of the human race; and when the government publishes its edicts, it still has to employ Indo-European (Persian), Semitic (Arabic), and Turanian (Turkish) speech. (See Rawlinson.)

A brief sketch is given of the generations of the sons of Noah:

1. The Japhetic family:

A. Gomer—the great Celtic race.
B. Magog—the Lydians.
C. Madai—the Medes.
D. Javan—the Greeks.
E. Tubal and Mesheck—ancestors to the Muscovites.
F. Askenas—the name the Jews always applied to Germany.

Max Muller says: "There was a time when the ancestors of the Celts, Germans, Slavs, Greeks, Italians, Persians, and Hindoos lived together beneath the same roof, and separated from the Semitic and Turanian races."

2. Semitic family:
   A. Elam—acc. to Assyrian monuments—Susiana.
   B. Asshur—Assyrians—language, Semitic.
   C. Aram—Aramaeans.—These are all so far identified.
3. Hamitic family:
   A. Cush—Father to Nimrod—Abyssinians.
   B. Mizraim—Egyptians.
   C. Phut—unknown—but name found on Egyptian monuments.
   D. Canaan—name found in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets and used during the time of Moses to designate Palestine.

The tables of the nations are given as 70 in all. Japhetic 14; Semitic, 26; Hamitic, 30. In Genesis 46: 27 we are told that "all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were 70 souls." Light is cast on the Divine purpose in Deut. 32: 8—9. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He seperated the sons of Adam; He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the Children of Israel." The dividing of the nations is connected with Israels place, as Gods selected people, in the great scheme of the worlds redemption. (Urquhart).

NIMROD.

Nimrod is the first founder of kingdoms, the originator of statecraft and of conquest. He, contrary to the Divine command (Ch. 9: 5—6), began to repeat the ancient outrages upon humanity. He becomes the first organizer of war. He assembled armies and extended his conquests by sword and the outpouring of blood. He laid his yoke upon the four great cities, Babylon, Erech, Accad, and Calneh. Nimrod has been identified with the Babylonian hero Gilgamesh. Mr. Pinches identifies him with Merodach, the great god of the Babylonians. The beginning of his kingdom (like Nimrod) was Babel, Erech and Calneh. He was a great hunter and is represented as catching and killing the great dragon of Chaos and Confusion.

N. T. HINTS.

Luke 3: 35.
Rev. 17: 16.

ILL.

Circumstances, and man. Instead of saying that man is the creature of circumstance, it would be nearer the mark to say that man is the architect of circumstance. It is character that builds an existence out of circumstance. Our strength is measured by our plastic power. From the same materials one man builds palaces, another hovels; one warehouses, another villas: bricks and mortar are mortar and bricks until the architect can make them something else. Thus it is that, in the same family, in the same circumstances, one man rears a stately edifice while his brother, vacillating and incompetent, lives forever amid ruins; the block of granite which was as obstacle in the pathway of the weak, becomes a stepping-stone in the path-way of the strong.

CHAPTER X.

Genesis 11.

Tower of Babel—Confusion of the Lips—The Times of Terah—Traditions—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Men multiplied and the table land of Armenia no longer suffice. They must find more fertile territory, and so they journey together until they come to a plain in the land of Shinar and they settle there. There was only one language for "All earth was of one lip." The words were pronounced in the same way. There were as yet no dialects. As the races increases there is fear of separation and so they desire to build a city and a tower. God's command implied a breaking up and scattering of the families. The people seek to defeat God's plan. They perhaps fear also that they, like the mighty fathers of old, will be forgotten so they say, "Let us build for us a city and a tower and let us make a name for ourselves."

We read that God comes down to see. These words are used only three times in scripture. This instance (ch. 11; and in the account of the destruction of Sodom; and in Exodus 3: 8, where God comes down to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians.

The judgment of God is tempered with mercy. No man perishes, but the council of "the children of men" is turned into foolishness. They lose interest in the building of the city and the tower. "God scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth and they leave off to build the city." (vs. 8—9). This dispersion possibly occurred in the days of Peleg. (See ch. 10: 25). In the course of time words are pronounced differently, new dialects spring up and then new languages. Scientific observation reveals the fact that the change from one speech into many languages was first of all a change produced by varying pronunciation.

The Tower of Babel yet remains and bears the name of Birs-Nimrod or Tower of Nimrod. It covers a square surface of 49,000 feet and is nearly 300 feet high. It towers yet like a mountain above the plain. The tower was partially destroyed by Xerxes after his return from Greece, 490 B. C. Alexander the Great determined to rebuild the tower, but when 10,000 workmen were not able to remove the rubbish within two months he gave up the enterprise. Nebuchadnezzar describes the tower and the rebuilding of it. "The temple of the seven lights of the earth, the tower of Borsippa, which the most ancient king had erected and had completed to a height of 42 yards — to restore it, the great god Merodach urged my mind; its site however, I did not injure. I did not change its foundation walls — to restore it and set up its pinnacles I raised my hand; as it was ages before, I built it anew; as it was in remote day, I erected its pinnacles."

TRADITIONS.

Kalisch says, "Most of the ancient nations possessed myths concerning giants who attempted to storm heaven, either to share it with the gods or expel them from it. In some of these fables the confusion of tongues is represented as the punishment inflicted by the deities for such wickedness; the tower by which the rebellious offenders intended to ascend up to heaven was overthrown by a mighty tempest. They were scattered into the various regions and therefore spoke different languages." Plato gives us the Greek form of the story. "The languages of men were divided because of their arrogance and their asking of the gods immortality and eternal youth."

Berossus gives us the Babylonian version. "The Sybil says that all men, having the same language, constructed an exceedingly high tower in order to ascend into heaven, but the

mighty God having raised a tempest overthrew the tower and gave to each different language, this is why the city was called Babylon."

The Armenian tradition, "Men in ancient times were of huge size and of great strength. Filled with pride and envy of God; they resolved to build a high tower, but whilst they were engaged on the undertaking a fearful wind overthrew it, which the wrath of God had sent against it. Unknown words were at the same time blown about among men, wherefore arose strife and confusion."

A remarkable form of the story is found among the Mexicans. "Those saved from the flood resolved to build a tower which would reach to the skies. Xelhua, one of their number was the architect. He ordered bricks to be made and to be conveyed to Cholula. The gods beheld the rising structure with indignation. They hurled fire upon it, overthrew it, and slew many of the builders. The work had to be discontinued as each family received a language of its own, and the builders were therefore unable to understand each other."

TIMES OF TERAH.

The eleventh chapter begins with the beginning of Babel and ends with the calling of Abram. The world had again fallen into idolatry. The true light was lost and instead of the worship of one god, we see the worship of many gods. Higher Criticism claims that Polytheism is first the religion of the people, and that the conception of one god is a later development. Paul tells us in Rom. 1: 21: "Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations and therefore their foolish heart was darkened." This testimony of scripture is sustained by modern research in the study of the religions of ancient people. In the Vedic

hymns we find the name of — "That" — and — "Our Sovereign Ruler." In an old hymn of the Vedas we read, "Grant that I enter not yet into the house of clay. Have pity on me, *O Almighty* — grant I may give satisfaction to the *Living God.*" In Egypt we find the worship of one god. "Thou are one and the myriads of beings proceed from Thee." The religion of Assyria and Babylonia show traces of an earlier and purer belief. The Zulus worship the lord of all. Monetheism is the primeval revelation and Polytheism appears "when men lost the light and became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened."

N. T. HINTS.

Uniting by language:
Acts 2: 1—11 .
Rev. 7: 9.

ILL.

Confusion of Tongues. The late Bishop Selwyn devoted a great part of his time to visiting the Melanesian Isles, and he thus writes home about the difficulty of languages: "Noth ing but a special interposition of the Divine Power could have produced such a confusion of tongues as we find here. In islands not larger than the Isle of Wight, we find dialects so distinct that the inhabitants of the various districts hold no communication one with another."

CHAPTER XI.

Genesis 12.

Call of Abram—The Blessing—Famine—Abram in Egypt—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Genesis centres towards one point — the father of the chosen people. The eleven previous chapters cover about

6,000 years; the remaining chapters cover about 300 years. From now on the records of Genesis cease to be the history of humanity they become the story of a single family. 39 of the 50 chapters are taken up with the story of three men, — Abraham — Isaac — and Jacob — and the hope of humanity is bound up in these three men.

The history of the life of Abram unfolds itself in four stages:

1. (Chs. 12—14) Call and emigration to Canaan.
2. (Chs. 15—16) Promise of heir, formation of the Covenant.
3. (Chs. 17—21) Change of name, Covenant sign of Circumcision.
4. (Chs. 22—25) Trial of Abraham, the preservation and perfecting of his faith.

The call comes to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees. Ur was the principal seat of the worship of the moon-god, and the centre of a great literary development. Ur was not only the capital, it was also the holy city of the Chaldeans. Ur-Engor, who reigned before the birth of Abraham, had in this city erected a beautiful temple to "Sin" the moon-god. Terah, Abrams father, was one of the princes of the people, and was an idol-worshipper. There is no doubt but that the religious ideas, which Abram acquired in his early home were idolatrous. At one time Abram also worshipped idols. This is indicated in Gen. 31: 53, where Laban swore "by the god of Abram and the god of their father, and Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. It is plainly indicated in Joshua 24: 2: "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old times, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor, and *they* served other gods."

Out of this fearful darkness God calls Abram to be the father of a chosen people. The call of Abram was one of the

most important events in the worlds history, judging from results; for upon the call of Abram depended the world's religion. Of the nature or as to the manner of the call we can only refer to the words of Stephen (Acts 7: 2). "The God of glory appeared unto him."

From Archaeology we know that Abram came out of one of the grandest civilizations, which the world has ever seen. Abram made therefor one of the greatest sacrifices which faith has ever offered. At Gods command he turned his back upon all prospects and allurements and a home of ease and plenty, to become a wanderer and a stranger, a man without a fatherland or a continous resting place, and whose only home "was the fellowship of God." When we observe the noble elements of his character, his faith, humility, courage, self-sacrific and gentleness, we can readily understand why he was chosen out of the world as "the friend of God." There can be little doubt that Mugheir is the site of the ancient Ur, the city of Abram .

God's promise to Abram contains the following:

1. Make of thee a great nation.
2. Bless thee.
3. Make thy name great.
4. Thou shalt be a blessing.
5. Bless them that bless thee.
6. Curse them that curse thee.
7. In thy name shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Abram departs for Canaan, a sheik at the head of a family of at least 1,000 souls. (Comp. Gen. 14: 14). Sacrifice is the invariable law of God's kingdom. To gain the higher we must give up the lower; to win Canaan we must loose Chaldea. "He who aspires after the heights, must part with the associotions and the home and the fields of the valley." (Vs.

1—2). The mingling of God's people with the world is always dangerous, and separation is as necessary now, as it was in the days of Abram. But not every one who sets out for the promised land of Canaan perseveres until he reaches it. May we be like Abram, and determine not to stop short of the promised land.

At Sichem Abram raises an altar to the Lord. A different altar from the one left behind in Chaldea. God appears before Abram and shows him the land of inheritance. There is no spot in all Palestine better calculated to give Abram his first grand view of the land than Sichem, for from this place he can see the land" flowing with milk and honey."

FAMINE.

There was famine in the land "(V. 10)" and Abram went down to Egypt. Abram is to be made perfect by trial. When the famine comes, Abram neither murmurs nor doubts, but journeys on to Egypt. Here he stumbles and falls. The women at that time went unveiled, as shown on the Egyptian monuments. The custom was changed after the conquest of the land by the Persians. The licentious character of the people, and of the court was known throughout the East. Abram knows the danger and feels certain, that if Sarai is known as his wife, his life is in danger. He persuades Sarai to deny their relationship, and to say that she is Abram's sister. That statement was true, but denying what was equally true, it becomes a lie. The Egypt of Abram was not the Egypt of Moses. Moses never saw *that* Egypt, and yet he has given us a true picture of the Egypt of Abrahams time. Only in the light of inspiration can this be explained.

N. T. HINTS.

Acts 7: 2—4.
Ef. 4: 1.
Gal. 1: 4.

ILL.

True Service must have Soul in it. A minister makes the following remarks in his sermon: — the want of this age — of all ages is — soul. — Abrams servants are called *souls*. In these times servants are called — hands. A world of difference. Hands — four fingers and a thumb to get as much out of as one can, and to put as little into, from the master's standpoint. And from the servants — to pick up as much as they can and to give as little back again. When master and man can find in each others relationship a soul — a living, earnest, brotherly soul, then only are the work and wages alike right. In least and commonest works we want not hands only, but souls. If I hire a man to do my garden and I find him scarcely playing at the work, for men put their souls into their play, but "dawdling" only, tickling the earth with a rake as if he expected it to laugh into flowers, I would sooner fling him a half crown and do the work right earnestly myself. So do we value soul, we who see but the outside of men. Think then of Him whose eyes do look us through — *the Father of spirits,* whose contact is even with the inner man, the soul. If that sleeps, how poor in his sight, how vain and mocking, is any service that we pretend to render him. Here all is worse than nothing, if there be not reality, heart, earnestness."

CHAPTER XII.

Genesis 13.

Abrams Return from Egypt—Lot—Strife—Separation—Renewal of the Covenant—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Abram's journey into Egypt, unbidden by the Lord, brought nothing but trouble. The beauty of his wife had

attracted the admiration and desire of the king; and Abram, following the ways of the world, had forsaken his faith in God, and sought to protect himself by deception. He returns from Egypt a wiser and a better man; his spirit is subdued, sobered and chastened. Yet God had protected him and we are told that Abram was rich in cattle, silver and gold. The Hebrew word signifies "heavy." He was very "heavy" with cattle, silver and gold. Riches are very often heavy. "There is a burden of care in getting them, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account at last to be given up concerning them."

An Arab sheik is considered rich, who has from 100 to 200 tents, 100 camels, 1,000 sheep and goats respectively; and Abram, being very rich, must have possessed far more than the above amount. He was also rich in silver. It is characteristic of early times, that silver is mentioned before gold, for it was very much more rare in Egypt and was called "white gold." He was also rich in gold. When Abram was in Egypt, gold was abundantly used, not only solid, molten, and graven, and in rings for currency, but beaten into thin plates for overlaying bronze, silver, wood, and stone.

STRIFE.

The resources of the country were reduced by drought for "there was famine in the land" (ch. 12). On the uplands of Bethel there would be a lack of water. Wells and herbage would become priceless in the eyes of the herdsmen. Hence the strife of the servants and the necessity of a separation. Abram shows himself to be a man of cool spirit that had command of his passions, and of condescending spirit to be willing to beseech even his inferior to be at peace, and in a magnanimous spirit of faith Abram leaves his younger companion to choose his own portion of the promised land. God's

people should be at peace among themselves, for the world watches the faults of Christians with eager eyes. The strife here arises through the question of property. Most strifes do. It is the old problem. Men care little about what you think or say regarding their hopes for the next world, but will quickly assert themselves, when present possessions are in any degree in danger. Friendships are more easily made and broken through matters of money than anything else.

Lot, Abram's nephew and charge, now separates himself from Abram before the covenant is sealed, and so separates himself from its blessing — Lot's descendants are Israel's enemies to the last. Lot's character appears to be weak and selfish. Although a good man, his moral sense was weakened by daily intercourse with the ungodly people with whom he dwelt. St. Peter calls him a righteous man, showing that his character was substantially true, but that he was fickle, lacking strength to act on his own conviction. Lot is untouched by the generosity of his uncle. Self interest blinded him. The well-watered plains of the Jordan valley delight his eye. Lot's choice was the "seen," Abram's the "unseen"; one was the temporal, the other the eternal; one was the seeming good, the other the real good; one brought sorrow, the other brought blessedness; so it is ever in the decision between the earthly and heavenly. A man's choice is indicative of the man. For the sake of possessions Lot pitched his tent in the very habitation of sin. In the end he lost all. He pitched his tent towards Sodom. He is soon in the city, but unhappy (2 Pet. 2: 8) and tainted in his own character, as we see by his later history. "Men fall on the side towards which they lean." The approach to a great sin is gradual, we are drawn little by little. "We first endure, then pity, then embrace." "He who keeps bad company pitches his tent towards Sodom; he who indulges in doubtful pleasures pitches

his tent towards Sodom, and he who pitches his tent towards Sodom will soon find himself in the city. (Rev. 18: 4.)

Abram was wiser than Lot. Lot becomes insnared in Sodom, Abram keeps away from city life with its idolatry and sin and dwells where he may walk with God. The Bedouin chief of the present day is very like, except in character, the chief or sheik of 4,000 years ago. Round about them are their flocks of sheep and goats and asses. The chief is there, marked out from the rest by his cloak of brilliant scarlet, by the fillet of rope which binds the loose handkerchief round his head, by the spear which he holds in his hand to guide the march and to fix the encampment. (Dean Stanley.)

Abram pitches his tent in the oaks of Mamre (v. 18), near Hebron. We may gaze to-day upon the tree under which Abram sat 39 centuries ago. These trees still form a feature of the place near Hebron. Dean Tristram, speaking about the oak under which Abram rested says, "It is a noble holm oak, the finest tree in southern Palestine. The tree is sound, measuring over 22 feet in circumference and stands close under the vineyard in a grassy field, with some of its descendants not very far off, and with a fine old well of sweet water just behind it."

N. T. HINTS.

Mark 4: 19.
Math. 10: 22.
1 Cor. 10: 12.
2 Tim. 4: 10.

ILL.

Sins, the most attractive, the most deadly. It is notable that nearly all the poisonous fungi are scarlet or speckled, and the wholesome ones brown or gray, as if to show us that things rising out of darkness and decay are always most deadly when they are well dressed.—RUSKIN.

CHAPTER XIII.

Genesis 14.

Battle of Abraham with the King—Melchisedek—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Many battles have raged around the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. It has been called a myth. It has been assailed as unhistorical. The four kings of the east were four seasons, and the five kings of the cities and of the plain were the five days which the Babylonians and the Persians add to their twelve months of 30 days each in order to make up the year. Archaeology has once for all put a stop to the controversy and proven the contents of Ch. 14 to be true to history. In this chapter we are brought face to face with the life of Babylonia. We have here the story of the battle of the kings. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and confederates had been subject to Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, for twelve years. In the thirteenth year they revolted. Chedorlaomer, together with three other kings, conquer the enemy and the inhabitants were led away captive. Word comes to Abraham that Lot is a captive. He gathered his trained servants, and also his allies, and pursued the kings, Chedorlaomer, Tidal, Amraphel, and Arioch, as far as Dan, where by strategy he routed them and won a notable victory. He restored Lot, and the possessions of the king of Sodom and paid tithes to Melchisedek, king of Salem. All this was at one time declared to be a narrative of a late Hebrew writer. "The patriarchs were relegated to the region of myth and legend. Abram was made a fictitious father of Hebrews. Some saw in Abram the name of a clan, others considered him to be a god, presumably the moon god; others claimed that Gen. 14 was a narrative of some predatory raid against Canaan, by a party of Beduion Arabs, to which legend the names of Lot and Abram were tacked on. The political situation was declared

to be inconsistent with fact. A military expedition of such proportions at that early date was regarded as incredible." All these theories disappear in the light of archaeology. The story of the battle of the confederate kings under Chedorlaomer is told in Assyrian tablets. Elam at that time was supreme from the Persian gulf to the Caspian Sea, and from the eastern border of Persia to the Mediterranean. Through the researches of Mr. Pinches of the British museum, the names of Chedorlaomer and of the others had been recovered. It has also been discovered that Amraphel is none other than Hammurabi. In a text from Sippora, his name is written Ammurabi. From inscriptions we learn that Amraphel inherited a throne subject to Elam. Afterwards Amraphel or Ammurabi conquered Elam and Arioch. The historical character of Gen. 14 has been proven.

MELCHISEDEK.

Abram returns with the spoils and comes to the valley of Shaveh (v. 17). The king of Sodom who had returned to his desolate city hastens to meet Abram. Here there is a remarkable break in the narrative. Nothing is said about what the king said to Abram. Another arrival attracts the attention of all. It is the priest king of Salem. All give way before this servant of God. Even the king of Sodom becomes one of those who look and listen. — This is the first time the word priest occurs in the Bible. — He blesses Abram. Abram accepts him as God's representative and hands over to him the portion which belongs to God. "And he gave him tithes of all."

Melchisedek appears for a brief moment and then is lost to sacred writings for many years. When for another moment David lifts him into view as a type of the priesthood of the Messiah. (Ps. 110: 4.) Again in the New Testament, the

writer to the Hebrews takes up the relation of Melchisedek to the priesthood of our Lord. (Hebr. 5: 6—10; 6: 17—20.)

This has been a difficult passage for Jew and Gentile. It has been hard to account for the deep reverence with which the priest king is received. Possibly Melchisedek was acting under the covenant made with Noah, which was for mankind at large and prevailed even for Abram, until his own covenant came into force. Various conjectures have been presented as to who Melchisedek was. Many of the Rabbins believed him to be the patriarch Shem. In the Targum we read, "But Melchisedek, king of Jerusalem, he is Shem, who was the great priest of the most high. Some have identified him with Ham, others with Enoch, returned to earth; others an angel, and others even the Lord himself. The Scripture speaks of Melchisedek as a type of Christ and being a type he cannot be Christ. There is an interesting statement about Melchisedek in Hebr. 7: 1—3, "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." Light is cast upon these words from the Tel-el-Amarna tablets discovered some years ago by a peasant woman searching in a mound for curios to sell to European travelers. These tablets were mainly letters from Palestine to the Pharaohs, Amenophis III, and Amenophis IV, about the time of the Exodus. Among the letters are some from Melchisedek's successors. Prof. Sayce gives the name as Ebed-Tob, "the servant of the good one." The following are two passages from his letters: "Lo, in so far as I am concerned, it was not my father who installed me, nor my mother, but the arm of the mighty king has allowed me to enter into my ancestral home." In another letter: "Lo, in regards to Jerusalem it was not my father nor my mother who gave it me, but the arm of the mighty king." The mighty king is the deity to whom he owes his position, and

whom he serves. Recall Melchisedek's words to Abram, "Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth" (v. 19). Melchisedek was the priest king of Jerusalem and the dominant Canaanitish ruler, to whom the neighboring rulers paid homage when they first received the crown. This would also explain why Abram gave him tithes.

Melchisedek gives Abram "bread and wine" — not the usual food of the country. Everything here reminds us of our High Priest; his authority, his name, his title, and the bread and wine.

Why does Melchisedek meet Abram now? Abram is in great spiritual danger. He was the hero of the hour. He was in danger of forgetting his calling and losing the blessing. So God's high priest steps in and brings Abram's spirit into God's presence. He can now see things rightly and make the right decision and give the right reply to the king of Sodom. (See vs. 22—24.)—URQUHART.

N. T. HINTS.

Acts 15: 9.
Gal. 5: 6.
1 John 5: 4.
Hebr. 5: 6; 6: 20; 7: 1—20.

ILL.

Victory, from God. Richard I, having vanquished the king of France at Gisors, wrote to Philip, bishop of Duresme, "We have not done the same, but God and our right by us."

The Scottish army (at Dunbar) was seen flying in all directions — flying, and so brief a flight! "They run!" said Cromwell; "I protest they run!" and catching inspiration, doubtless from the bright shining of the day beam, his voice was again heard, "Now let God rise, and let his enemies be scattered."

CHAPTER XIV.

Genesis 15.

God's Promise to Abram—Prophecy Concerning Israel's Bondage —N. T. Hints—Ill.

God comes to his servant Abram with encouragement, and with a glorious promise, "Fear not, Abram." — Possibly rumors of a fresh invasion from Babylon had come to Abram, and he feared that vengeance might be exacted for the defeat of the Babylonian army. God takes away the fear of Abram by assuring him, "I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Abram speaks to God for the first time, and responds to his declarations. Abram does not understand how God shall fulfil his promise of a "seed," "seeing I go childless." God assures him that Eliezer, Abram's steward, shall not be the heir, but that Abram's heir shall be his own child (v. 4). God had formerly directed Abram to the "dust," that he might, by it, calculate his seed. He now directs him to the sky. "Alone with God, in the deep silence of the night, gazing on that starry host, such an impression of the boundless power and love and faithfulness of God fills Abram's spirit, that all doubt disappears," and he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness" (v. 6). — The Hebrew word for "believe" means "to rely upon." The word is "Aman," from which we have "Amen," — to be assured, or to confide.

The same stars, upon which Abram looked, we may look upon; the same God who gave Abram promises, gives them to us.

Abram needed the encouragement of God:

1. His reaction after a brave act.
2. Physical and nervous exhaustion.

3. He had incurred the enmity of the great powers of the East.
4. Disappointed hopes, — he had no children.

Abram shall be the father of many nations. — Israel, Arabs, Midianites, Ammonites, and Moabites sprang from Abram. Two branches of his strong stock yet remain — the Jews and the Arabs. The highest fulfilment was in *Christ* our Lord, the "seed" of Abram.

PROPHECY CONCERNING ISRAEL'S BONDAGE. Vs. 8—17.

The very solemn form of ratifying a covenant is particularly mentioned in Jer. 34: 18. It consisted in cutting the throat of the victim, and pouring out its blood. The carcass was then divided lengthwise, as nearly as possible into equal parts, which being placed opposite to each other at a short distance, the covenanting parties approached at the opposite side of the passage thus formed, and meeting in the middle, took the customary oath. This practice was by no means peculiar to the Hebrews. Traces of it may be found in the Greek and Roman writers and in the accounts of travelers. (Bush.)

God reveals to Abram the Egyptian bondage. "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them 400 years." Three things are indicated with reference to Abram's descendants:

1. They are to be without a fatherland.
2. They are to be enslaved.
3. They are to be persecuted.

In this chapter the years are given as 400. In Exodus 12: 40—41, the number is given as 430. "The sojourning of the children of Israel — 430 years." The words in this chapter are spoken to Abram before Isaac was born, "thy seed." The

400 years count from the birth of Isaac. The 430 years, as given in Exodus, represents the time from the call of Abram to the Exodus "out of Egypt." The following table will make this clear:

1. Abram, after his "call" remained in Haran	5 years	
2. From entering Canaan to the birth of Isaac	25 years	
		30
3. From birth of Isaac to birth of Jacob....	60 years	
4. Jacob's age on entering Egypt.....	130 years	
		190
		220
5. Jacob lived in Egypt.....	17 years	
6. Levi outlived Jacob (Ex. 6: 16).....	76 years	
7. Age of Moses at Exodus.....	80 years	
		173
8. Interval between death of Levi and the birth of Moses	37 years	37
		210
Total years.....		430

Israel's sojourn in Egypt proper embraced only 210 years. In v. 16 of this chapter God tells Abram, that "in the 4th generation they shall come hither again." The Jews understood the 430 years to refer from the call of Abram to the Exodus. A Rabbinical commentary on Genesis says: "The captivity of Egypt began from the birth of Isaac." The Septuagint renders Ex. 12: 40—41: "But the sojourning of the children of Israel during which they dwelt in Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, was 430 years." The Samaritan text reads: "And the sojourning of the children of Israel and of their fathers in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt was 430 years." These show clearly how the passage was understood by the Jews. Paul understood it in the

same way, for he writes in Gal. 3: 17—18: "This I say, the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, which was 430 years after, cannot disannull that it should make the *promise* of none effect." Thus, from the call (covenant) of Abram to the giving of the law (Sinai), 430 years.

N. T. HINTS.

John 12: 26.
Rom. 4.
Ef. 2: 8.
Rom. 5: 3—4.

ILL.

Faith, dying in. As Luther lay dying Dr. Jones said to him, "Reverend father, do you die firm in the faith you have taught?" He opened his eyes, which were half closed, looked fixedly at Jones, and replied, firmly and distinctly, "Yes." He then fell asleep. Soon after those nearest him saw him grow paler and paler; he became cold, his breathing was more and more faint; at length he sent forth one deep sigh, and the great reformer was dead. (Michelet.)

CHAPTER XV.

Genesis 16: 17.

Hagar and Ishmael—Change of Names—Circumcision—N. T. Hints—Ill.

In this 16th chapter we have the story of Sarai's device. The fulfilment of the promise still lingered; faith is tried and Sarai seeks to provide for what God had promised and alone could bestow. Sarai's devise is adopted by Abram, and trouble in the home is the result.

"A thousand volumes written against polygamy would not lead to a clearer, fuller conviction of the evil of that practice than the story under review." Hagar despises her mistress. Sarai asserts her authority and Hagar flees from the home. God commands her to return. Ishmael is born and Abram's affection entwines itself around him, who is not to be his heir.

Sarai gives Hagar to Abram. Later on we read that Rachel and Leah give their maids, Bilhah and Zilpah, to Jacob. Abram and Jacob lived in a civilization in which this practice was perfectly legal, and was sanctioned by long established custom. Light is cast upon this point in the laws of Hammurabi (Amraphel, Gen. 14). The laws there quoted give a childless wife the right to give her maid as a servant wife to her husband. One section of the law reads: "If a wife has given a maid to her husband and she has borne children, afterwards that wife has made herself equal with her mistress, because she has borne children, her mistress shall not sell her for money. She shall put a mark upon her, and count her among the maidservants." So in accordance with this law Abram tells Sarai: "Behold thy maid is in thy hand, do to her as it pleaseth thee" (v. 6). Sarai could not sell Hagar for money, but she could "deal hardly with her." The unfruitful Hannah received like treatment from the second wife of her husband (1 Sam. 1: 6).

The Hebrew regarded barrenness as a great evil and a divine punishment (ch. 30: 1—29), and fruitfulness as a great good and a divine blessing (ch. 21: 6; 24: 60). The Orientals regard barrenness and fruitfulness in the same light still.

God prophecies concerning Ishmael: "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand will be against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren" (v. 12). Three things are foretold concerning Ishmael and his descendants:

1. They should be wild men.
2. Their hand should be against mankind.
3. Every man's hand should be against them.

History tells us of the fulfilment of this prophecy. Even to this day the descendants of Ishmael continue in hostility to the greater part of mankind. "On the margin of the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf commerce has exerted some influence, but the Eastern Arabs, or Nabatheans, are almost entirely freebooters, living by plunder. Although spread over a country thirteen hundred miles long and twelve hundred miles broad, they are comparatively secure, while those who are sometimes hardy enough to follow them either die with thirst or are compelled to return, overcome with fatigue and sickness. Their water is obtained from wells sunk amid the rocks and plains, which they inhabit, and known only to themselves. Notwithstanding the opposition they have met with from the ancient Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, and the Macedonians, they have from first to last maintained their independence. No conqueror has subdued them; and they still, as a memento of Scripture prophecy, "dwell in the presence of all their brethren."

In the 17th chapter two things are briefly mentioned: the change of the names of Abram and Sarai, and circumcision.

In the Eastern countries a change of name is an advertisement of some new circumstance in the history, rank, or religion of the individual who bears it. The change is made either by the old name being entirely dropped for the new, or by conjoining the old with the new; or sometimes only a few letters are inserted, so that the altered form may express the difference in the owner's state or prospects. God adapts his procedure to the ideas and customs of the country and age. Instead of Abram, "a high father," he is called "Abraham," a father of a multitude, of nations.

"The ground upon which the new names are given lies in the fact that God reveals himself to Abraham under a new name, *El-Shaddai,* 'the God of power to do wonders — to create new things in the old world.' The wonders of *El-Shaddai* run through the whole kingdom of grace, but the great wonder lying at the foundation of all that follows is the birth of Isaac in the near future from his 'dead' parents (Rom. 4: 18—24; Hebr. 11: 11—19)."

Abraham receives the sign of circumcision. God says that this seal shall be a token of the covenant between God and Abraham. The object of the covenant is to secure a seed that would possess the spiritual characteristics as set forth in the covenant, or that for which God was exercising his redemptive grace (see Rom. 2: 28—29; Phil. 3: 3).

Circumcision signifies the putting off the sins of the flesh (Col. 2: 11).

Circumcision is the seal of the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4: 11).

Through this sign God intends to distinguish the people of his possession from all other nations. He represents in it the spiritual circumcision of the heart — the new birth.

Ishmael was 13 years old when he was circumcised (v. 25). For this reason the Arabians and other descendants of Ishmael, and even the followers of Mohammed, defer circumcision till the age of 13 years; and when it occurs, it is made a festival occasion of great rejoicing.

N. T. HINTS.

Gal. 4: 22—25.
Rom. 4: 11.
Col. 2: 10—13.
Hebr. 6: 12.

Promise, a sufficient. When Fisher, bishop of Rochester, came out of the Tower of London and saw the scaffold on which he was to be beheaded, he took out of his pocket a Greek Testament, and, looking up to heaven, he exclaimed, "Now, O Lord, direct me to some passage which may support me through this awful scene." He opened the book, and his eye glanced on the text, "This is life eternal, that they know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." He instantly closed the book, and said, "Praised be the Lord, this is sufficient for me and for eternity."

God, Omnipresent. Few better replies are upon record than that of young Dr. Chateaunoeuf, to whom a bishop once said, "If you will tell me where God is I will give you an orange." "If you will tell me where he is not I will give you two," was the child's answer.

CHAPTER XVI.

Genesis 18: 19.

God's Visit to Abraham—Abraham's Prayer—Lot Saved—Sodom Destroyed—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The Lord appeared unto Abraham. — At noontide three persons bearing the form of men but the aspects of angels appear at the patriarch's tent. Abraham begs them to remain to rest and to partake of the noonday meal, which they do. Sarah prepares the meal, but remains in her tent. The custom of Syria at the present time and probably ever since the time of Abraham is: The man of the house and the strangers partake of the meal, then the women come in and partake of what is left. Sarah prepared the meal, but did not present

it, that being Abraham's office. She stood in the tent which was behind him. The strangers had two messages for Abraham. The first, "Sarah, thy wife, shall have a son." When Sarah heard these words we are told "Sarah laughed within herself." Abraham laughed when the son was promised to him from wonder and joy, Sarah laughed from doubtfulness and joy. The angel reproved her because, though that laughter was from joy, yet, it was not of full faith. Afterwards by the same angel she was confirmed in faith also. The second message that Sodom shall be destroyed for its wickedness. The person who is here mentioned as talking with Abraham was one of these angels who appeared to him at Hebron. This one is carefully distinguished in the narrative from the other two, who appear in the next chapter to Lot in Sodom. This angel is addressed as Lord, receives the honor paid to God. He is the pre-incarnate manifestation of the Son of God and called in the Old Testament "The Angel of the Covenant." Abraham thus stands in the presence of the eternal Word of God, the messenger of the covenant. Now commences one of the most remarkable instances of human intercession to be met with in the whole compass of revelation. The tender and sympathizing benevolence of Abraham, the clemency and forebearing of Jehovah are portrayed in colors such as the pencil of inspiration alone can present.

"Abraham stood yet before the Lord." He knows enough of Sodom and of God to dread the result of God's inquiry and so he pleads for the city. His plea is based upon the supposition that God would not punish the righteous with the guilty. Abraham goes on from step to step. God grants him step by step. God thus draws out from Abraham the measure and intensity of his priestly spirit; while Abraham, on his side, wins a clearer insight as to the judgment of God

upon Sodom and as to the condition of Sodom itself. God would spare the city for the sake of ten righteous. The criminals, the soldiers and sailors were spared on Paul's account. Many guilty cities have been spared for the sake of the righteous in them. The righteous are "the salt of the earth."

Ch. 19. After the bringing back of the captives (ch. 14) the revelry in Sodom continued. The mad rush for pleasure went on as before. Mercy hides her face and judgment steps in with bared sword. The two angels find Lot in Sodom. The world had cast its toils around him. He married one of the daughters of Sodom and brought up his children in daily contact with its crime. The angels are entertained by Lot. They bid him save himself and family from the destruction to fall upon Sodom. Lot, bewildered, stands irresolute; the angels in mercy seize him and bring him without the walls and bid him flee for his life. "And the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities and that which grew upon the ground" (vs. 24—25).

Prof. Sayce writes, "The expression 'brimstone and fire out of heaven' is found in the cuniform tablets of Babylonia. Whatever may have been the nature of the sheet of flame which enveloped the guilty cities of the plain and set on fire the naphtha springs that oozed out of it, the remembrance of the catastrophe survived to distant ages. The prophets of Israel and Juda refer to the overthrow of the cities, and St. Jude points to them as suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. The prevailing belief has been that the Dead Sea covers the site of Sodom and Gomorrah. There is no hint of this in the narrative. Strabo, the ancient geographer, who visited Sodom a quarter of a century before the commencement of

the Christian era says, "It is said that this country is burnt up by fire. Here and there places formerly inhabited by man are now confused masses of ruin. It is thus easy to put faith in the tradition universally believed throughout the country that 13 cities formerly existed there." Tacitus, the Roman historian, who wrote in the first century of our era, speaking of the Dead Sea says, "Not far from this place are fields that we are told were formerly fertile and occupied by large cities. But they were burnt up by thunder and lightning and the ruins still remain upon them." Sodom and its fellow cities were still open to observation during the time of Moses according to Deut. 29: 21—23. See also Isaiah 13: 19—22 and Jer. 49: 17—18.

M. de Saulcy was the first in modern times to discover the sites of the city. He tells us of his discovery in his book "Journey around the Dead Sea." He found the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah north of the lake. There is a mount called by the Arabs "Gebel Sedoum" — mount of Sodom. Below the mount are ruins called Kharbet Sedum — ruins of Sodom. The Arabic exactly repeating the Hebrew name. The reference of the Scripture to the salt and burning by which the land has been wasted are emphatic; both are prominent features of the district as it is to-day.

The vale of Siddim was afterwards submerged (see Gen. 14: 3). Lynch, the commander of the American expedition which explored the Dead Sea, says, "The bottom of the sea consists of two submerged plains, an elevated and a depressed one, the former averaging 13, the latter about 1,300 feet below the surface." This shallow portion seems to be the submerged plains of Siddim.

God apparently uses agencies in the very nature of Sodom and the plain, which was full of slime and bitumen pits. (Gen. 14: 10.) The whole region abounds in a peculiar

manner with bitumen, sulphur, and salt. Sir William Dawson shows that the great beds of bituminous lime stone extend below the Jordan valley and much of the Dead Sea, and that the escape of inflammable gas from these through the opening of fissures along a great "line of fault" is capable of producing all the effects described. He also tells of an incident that happened in the district of Petrolia, Canada. A bore hole struck a reservoir of gas, which rushed upward with explosive force, carrying before it a large quantity of petroleum. The gas took fire, forming a tall column of flame while the burning petroleum spread over the ground and ignited tanks of the substance in the vicinity. In this way a space of about 15 acres was burned. The air flowing towards the eruption caused a whirlwind and carried the dense smoke high in the air and threw bitumen all around."

LOT'S WIFE.

Out of regret from all they had left in Sodom, property, associates, probably married children, Lot's wife lingered behind the rest and the fiery storm and eruption of liquid saline mud overtook her. "And she became a pillar of salt." Some of the victims at Pompeii stumbled in their flight and were buried under ashes, which still keep the outline of their figure. So Lot's wife was carried with a half liquid slimy mud. Pillars of salt are found in the vicinity, which have formed from the spray, mist, and saline exhalations of the Dead Sea. One of these, 40 feet high, near Usdum south of the Dead Sea, is traditionally named from Lot's wife.

In the early rising of Abraham, his hastening to the place where he stood before Jehovah, and his silent look to the smoking vale of Siddim, we have a sublime and impressive picture. There stands the mourning priest, lonely and silent in the morning light, as Jeremiah sat upon the ruins of

Jerusalem. Now Abraham realizes that there were not ten righteous in Sodom.

N. T. HINTS.

Ef. 6: 18.
Hebr. 4: 14; 7: 25.
1 Cor. 3: 15.
2 Pet. 2: 8.

ILL.

Saved, by destruction of works. As is well known, Sir James Thornhill painted the inside of the cupola of St. Paul's Cathedral. After having finished one of the compartments, he gradually retired backwards to see how it looked at a distance. Intent on the painting, he had approached to the very edge of the scaffolding, and was in the utmost danger of falling from it, when a person, perceiving his situation, and fearing to alarm him by calling out, snatched up a brush and disfigured his painting. The artist sprang forward in great displeasure, but was soon impressed with gratitude, when he discovered the danger in which he had been placed, and saw that, by this way, his life had been preserved.

CHAPTER XVII.

Genesis 20: 21.

Abraham's Sin—Hagar—Ishmael—N. T. Hints—Ill.

There are but few points to be noticed in ch. 20. The incident is somewhat similar to the one recorded in ch. 12. Abraham repeats his former fault. Again fear fills his heart —a reaction after his high spiritual experiences. Abraham in Gerar, is, in a certain sense, a counterpart of Lot in the caves. Lot fears the presence of men. Abraham appears to

have sought a wider intercourse, but falls into folly and sin after the experience of the great judgment upon Sodom. Abraham again requests that Sarah represents herself as his sister, "lest he be killed." The statement was not false (v. 12), but it was not the whole truth. "Clear and round dealing is the honor of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold or silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious; and therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason, the word of the lie should be such a disgrace and such an odious charge; saith he: "If it will be weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much as to say that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men. For a lie faces God and shrinks from man." (Bacon.)

"Abemelech" was a standing title of the kings of Philistia as Pharaoh was of the kings of Egypt. Abemelech takes Sarah to his palace. By the side of the Hamitic women in Egypt and Canaan, Semitic women, even when advanced in age as Sarah, would be admired as beautiful. God comes to Abemelech in a dream and warns him, and tells him what he shall do, "Restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live" (v. 7). Abraham had previously appeared as a royal warlike hero in his conflict with the Eastern kings; as priest in his intercessory prayer for Sodom; and here he appears pre-eminently as a prophet. Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abemelech and his household. Prayer is the hidden well, a secret source of strength and joy and wisdom, not only in times of trouble, but always.

In the 21st chapter we notice the divine fulfilment of past pledges. Nearly 20 years passed since the promise of an heir was given to Abraham. Now the promise is fulfilled. Abraham and Sarah have not believed in vain. Sarah rejoices. It is now the laughter of joy and gratitude, and not the laughter of doubt and disbelief. Abraham rejoices. Our Lord reveals the profoundest source of this joy, when he says, "Abraham, your father rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad" (Joh. 8: 56).

When Isaac was weaned, Abraham made a great feast, and there was great rejoicing. When the Persian ambassador was in England, he attributed to the custom of early weaning the greater forwardness of the children of England, in mental acquirements, than those of his own country, where male children are often kept to the breast till three years of age, and never taken from it till two years and two months. The practice is nearly the same in other Asiatic countries. In India the period is precisely three years. When the child is weaned in Persia, the Persians make "a great feast," to which friends and relatives are invited, and of which the child also partakes, this being in fact his introduction to the customary fare of the country. Ishmael, at the feast of the weaning of the child, made sport of Isaac, instead of sharing the joy of the household. His heart is filled with jealosy, and he laughs in derision at Isaac. Paul tells us in Gal. 4: 29 that Ishmael persecuted Isaac. Sarah demands of Abraham that he cast out the bondwoman and her son, "for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." We now understand why this was "very grievous in Abraham's sight" (vs. 10—11). The ancient laws of Babylonia says: "If a man's wife has borne him sons, and his maidservant has borne him sons, — the father in his lifetime has said to his sons which the maidservant has borne

him, 'my sons,' — has numbered them with the sons of his wife; after the father has gone to his fate, the sons of his wife and the sons of the maidservant shall share equally in the goods of the father's house." Sarah realizes this danger. Ishmael can share with Isaac. Her son can of course have first choice. Hence her words to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son." But Abraham had acknowledged Ishmael as his son, and the righteous Abraham could not deprive him of his inheritance and respect the law. God appears to Abraham, and gives him a divine command. God will assume the care of Ishmael, and God was with the lad" (v. 20). It was wise that Ishmael be cast out. He would have taken advantage of Isaac. Isaac is the chosen seed, "in Isaac shall thy seed be called." Isaac is the type of Christ. He is the son of Abraham and the son of promise, born after the spirit and the heir. Jesus is the Son of Abraham and the great Son of promise, conceived by the Holy Ghost and the heir. (Rom. 8: 17.)

N. T. HINTS.

1 John 4: 17—18.
Com. Gen. 20: 7 with Rom. 8: 34.
Gal. 4: 22—31.
John 3: 16.

ILL.

Prayer, power of. Just as a shoemaker makes a shoe, and a tailor a coat, so also ought the Christian to pray. The Christian's trade is praying. And the prayer of the Church works miracles. In our days it has raised from the dead three persons, viz., myself, having been frequently sick unto death; my wife Catherine, who likewise was dangerously ill; and Melanchton, who was sick unto death at Weimar. And though their rescue from sickness and other bodily dangers

be but trifling miracles, nevertheless they must be exhibited for the sake of those whose faith is weak.—LUTHER.

Sorrows, how to escape. I have stood upon Mount Holyoke when I heard the thunder below; and I have seen men traveling up the side, and making haste to get out of the storm. I, standing higher than they, escaped both the rain, the wind, and the "pelting" thunder; and they, going up through the storm, got on the top and were also free from it Many, many storms there are that lie below and hug the ground; and the way to escape them is to go up the mountain-side and *get higher than they are.*—BEECHER.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Genesis 22.

Sacrifice of Isaac—Land of Moriah—Isaac and Christ—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The incident recorded in this chapter has been variously commented upon. Some have described this incident as Abraham's mistake, the delusion of a good man; others have explained the sacrifice of Isaac by saying, that it was customary among the surronding people to show reverence and devotion for their gods by such a sacrifice, and that Abraham was going to show that his love for Jehovah was not less than theirs for Moloch or for Baal. He was however prevented from carrying out his purpose by the Lord. The word "tempt" is an unfortunate translation. It should be "God did prove Abraham." The same word is found in 1 Kings 10: 1, where we read that the Queen of Sheba "came to *prove* Solomon with hard questions," and again in 1 Sam. 17: 39 where David says of Saul's armor, "I have not *proved* them."

Satan tempts men to evil; God tries them for his own good purpose. "A rope is tested by a weight, not to break it, but to see if it is fitted to hold up more precious things. The meaning of trial is not only to test worthyness, but to increase it, as the oak is not only tested by the storm, but toughened by it." The fire not only discovers what is true gold, but makes the true gold more pure. God tests Abraham's faith, and his faith arose and proved itself the faith of yore. All other possible bonds were snapped asunder and without a murmur he goes to obey the command of God. "After these things," this trial may have been sorely needed.

It required great faith to believe in the birth of Isaac, but greater faith to sacrifice the son of promise, the only son, the son whom he loved. Faith triumphs, and Abraham goes to obey the command of God. "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold," says Job. Abraham looks not upon the thing to be done, but upon him who commands. Faith has taught him not to argue, but obey. "And he rose up early in the morning." He prepares the sacrifice, but the blow is never struck. The Angel of the Lord speaks, and with unspeakable joy Abraham listens to the voice of God speaking to him the Divine satisfaction. "God is wise to conceal the help he intends in the several changes of thy life, so he may draw thy heart into an entire dependence on his faithful promise." Thus to try the metal of Abraham's faith, he let him go on till his hand was stretched forth, and then he comes to his rescue. Christ sends his disciples to sea, but stays behind himself, on a design, to try their faith and show his love.

Urquhart says: "We have here Gods picture of the coming salvation:

1. As Abraham and Isaac went up the mountainside alone, communing regarding the sacrifice, that was to be offered, so from Bethlehem to Calvary did Jesus, bearing the

cross on his heart, as Isaac carried the wood for the burnt offering upon his shoulder, commune with the Father in a fellowship which no man shared.

2. There is no reason to be found in themselves for the terrible tragedy which is to be consummated on the mountain-top. Isaac had done nothing worthy of death. There is no wrath in Abrahams heart against his son. So the Father and the Son. The Father must smite and the Son must suffer, but there is no wrath in the Fathers heart and no wrongdoing in the Son. It was needful for the worlds redemption.

3. Isaac's self-surrender. He does not attempt to flee and does not struggle. Could there be a more perfect picture of our Lord's surrender to the Father? "Not my will but Thine be done."

4. We have a glimpse also of the Fathers sacrifice. This is a side of the atonement frequently forgotten.

5. There are other features of the calvary story that become visible as we linger before this page of the Patriarch's history. For example, who were to slay Jesus? The Abraham among the nations. It was the very people who hoped and longed for his coming; who rejoiced in the promise of his coming, and in the glories which he was to bring; who prayed, and entreated, and watched for his coming. That is the horror of Calvary, and is pictured in the horror of Moriah. This sacrifice served Abraham. It was a time of revealing, when he saw the day of Christ afar off and was glad. God leads his "friends" into the very heart of the mystery, into the fellowship of the Divine suffering."

6. The following facts may also be noticed with reference to this story:

A. The Father — Abraham, type of God, offering his beloved Son.

B. The place — Moriah — Calvary — Isaac carried the wood, Christ his cross.

C. Sacrifice — willing — substitution — death of the Ram.

D. Resurrection — Isaac's life given back on the third day — Christ arose on the third day.

Moriah. "The land of Moriah." Never before and never after is mention made of any part of Palestine by that name. "The land of Moriah" means "the land of the seeing of Jehovah." Dr.Thomson in his: "The Land and the Book," says: "In regards to the question about the true site of that most wonderful act of Abraham, I believe it was on mount Moriah, where the altar of burnt sacrifice was erected by Solomon, and near the place where the greatest sacrifice of an infinitely greater Son was finally offered."

N. T. HINTS.

Obedience:

1 Peter 1: 7.
Gal. 1: 15—16.
Hebr. 11: 17—19.
James 2: 21.

ILL.

Sacrifice, for others. Last summer, in California, a gentleman who had just returned from the Sandwich Islands told me this incident. He said one of the Sandwich Islands is devoted to lepers. People getting sick of the leprosy on the other islands are sent to that isle of lepers. They never come off. They are in different stages of the disease, but all that die on that island, die of leprosy. On one of the healthy islands there was a physician who always wore his hand gloved, and it was often discussed why he always had a glove on that hand. One day this physician came to the city

authorities, and he withdrew his glove, and he said to the officers. "You will see on that hand a spot of the leprosy, and that I am doomed to die. I might hide this for awhile, but I am a physician, and I can go on that island and administer to the suffering. Send me to the isle of lepers." They, seeing the spot of leprosy, of course took the man into custody. He bade farewell to his family and to his friends. He could never see them again. He was taken to the isle of lepers and there wrought among the sick until prostrated by his own death, which at last came.—TALMAGE.

CHAPTER XIX.

Genesis 23.

Death of Sarah—Burying Place—N. T. Hints.—Ill.

The death of Sarah is the only instance of the age, death and burial of a woman given in the Bible. It would seem from the narrative that Abraham was not present when Sarah died. Possibly the shepherd prince was busy in his calling in the field or in the environs. We read, "Abraham came to mourn for Sarah." (V. 2). Yet these words may indicate the Syrian custom of mourning for the dead, near the door of the house. Then the words "Abraham came to mourn for Sarah," would mean, that Abraham came out of his own separate tent and, seating himself on the ground near the door of her tent, where her corpse was placed,—that he might perform those public solemn rites of mourning, that were required, as well by decency as affection,—lamented with many tears the loss he had sustained.

There had been many separations in the life of Abraham

— leaving Ur — the death of his father, Terah; his parting from Lot; the putting away of Ishmael; the sacrifice of Isaac; and now, the hardest possibly of them all, the death of Sarah, his wife.

Sarah like Abraham was far from perfect. She was as much to blame as Abraham in the matter of Pharaoh and Abemelech. No doubt Abemelech used irony when he sent her 1,000 pieces of silver to buy a veil with. (Gen. 20: 16). Yet she shares the vicissitudes, hopes and blessings of Abraham. She left her native land in obedience to the call of God. She rejoiced with Abraham in the revelations of God. She is privileged to be the mother, by special providence, of the son of promise. She is historically the most important woman of the Old Testament. She is the "Mary" of the Old Testament. In her unshaken faith Mary rises still higher than Sarah, but the scripture neither record the length of her life nor her death. The reason may be this: Sarah's son was no greater than herself, but Mary bore a son before whose glory all her own personalities fades and vanishes away.

Abraham makes arrangements for the burial of Sarah and buys a field from Ephron. The first real estate of the patriarchs was therefore a grave. In the purchase of this field, we have a true picture of oriental politeness. The politeness of Abraham may be seen exemplified among the highest and lowest of the people of the east to-day. With that grace do all classes how on receiving a favor, or in paying their respects to a superior! Sometimes they bow down to the ground; at other times they put their hands on their bosoms and gently incline the head; they also put the right hand on the face, and sometimes give a long and graceful sweep with the right hand from the forehead to the ground. In making purchases from an Arab, his politeness is almost amazing. When the price is asked, he replies, "Whatever

you please, my lord." When pressed for a more definite answer, he says, "Take it without money." The feeling of romance, however, is somewhat damped when one finds that the price ultimately demanded is 4 or 5 times the value of the article. (See vs. 5—16).

Abraham buried Sarah in a cave of the field of Mach-pe-lah. This cave is obscured from view by a Turkish Mosque, which is built about it, concealing it from the view of Jew and Christian. This grave contains the remains of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebeckah, Jacob and Leah, and is venerated alike by Jew, Moslem and Christian. No sight of sacred significance in the Holy Land is better authenticated by historic landmarks and traditions than this cave. All except the Moslem, are prevented from entering even the outer enclosure, so jealously does the Turk guard the resting place of his great ancestor. "In the point of antiquity this tomb stands alone and it is the oldest family burying ground of which any land can boast."

A very interesting comparison has been made between the cave of Mach-pe-lah and the tomb of Christ.

Machpelah.	Tomb of Christ.
1. Gathered about it God's Covenant of peace.	Centered the pledge of redeeming grace.
2. Patriarchs came to it full of faith regarding the future.	Jesus came to his tomb knowing his body would rest in hope. (Ps. 16: 9).
3. They rejoiced in the coming possessions of their seed.	Jesus rejoiced in the salvation he was bringing the world.
4. The very tomb was a living hope.	Christ's empty tomb is our immortality.

N. T. HINTS.

1 Thes. 4: 12.
2 Cor. 8: 21.
Rom. 13: 8.

ILL.

Uprightness, Instance of. The attorney general was weak and criminal enough to request his (Sir John Fitz-James') interests on the part of the king in a cause to be tried before him. "I will do the king right," he replied. A verdict was given against the crown, and the attorney general expostulated with Fitz-James, who dismissed the subject by adding, "I could not do his majesty right if I had not done justice."

CHAPTER XX.

Genesis 24.

Eliezer—Rebekah and Isaac—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The whole family of Terah migrated from Ur to Haran. When the call again comes to Abraham, he went forth, accompanied by Lot only. The rest of the family remained in Haran. When Abraham sends his servant to take a wife for Isaac from among his own people, he sends to Haran, not to Ur. Haran lies at the meeting of the great commercial highways in the north of Mesopotamia. Dr. Harper says that Haran was the frontier town of Babylonia. The reason why Terah remained in Haran was that he found there the same religion as in Ur. Its temple was dedicated to the moon-god, like the temple of Ur. "Sin," the moon-god, is called in an inscription of 800 B. C., "The Lord of Haran."

Abraham directs his servant to secure for Isaac a wife

from among his own people. Isaac is not permitted to go to Mesopotamia to secure his wife. In Mr. Grant's "Nestorians" we find an interesting account of the marriage customs in the East: "Among the Jews, the father of the family selects wives for his sons, and husbands for his daughters. If a son had a preference for any person as his wife, he asked his father to obtain her from her father. But the father could not give the daughter in marriage without the consent of the brothers. These are the very rules observed by the Nestorians at the present day. No young man thinks of making a marriage contract for himself. In case the father is dead, the eldest brother takes the father's place. Where the intended bride lives at a distance the matter is sometimes intrusted to some faithful servant, or agent, as was done by Abraham in relation to his son Isaac. The event was remarkably illustrated by the history of a marriage that took place a short time since among the Nestorians in the mountains. Indeed there was such a remarkable coincidence of names and circumstances that it seemed like acting over again that most interesting part of sacred history. The Nestorian patriarch Abraham, who was in the place of a father to his younger brother, Isaac, being desirous of procuring a wife for his foster son, sent his most trusty steward to a distant part of the country to obtain one from among his own people. The servant took with him jewels and raiment for the future wife of Isaac, and presents for her near relatives. He was no less prosperous than the servant of his master's namesake, the ancient patriarch Abraham. But though I became acquainted with all parties in the case, I must leave the reader's imagination to fill up some of its incidents. Only let him substitute mules for camels, which are not used in the mountainous country, and I may refer to the close of the 24th chapter of Genesis for the sequel.

The damsel was brought to the home of this modern patriarch and "Isaac took her and she became his wife and he loved her."

Eliezer is a type of a true servant. He is faithful to his master. He is absolutely trustworthy, and withal a pious and God-fearing man. He felt accountable to God as well as to Abraham. His name is therefore given a place in the Book of books. Eliezer departs upon his journey and "comes to the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, the time that women go out to draw water" (v. 11).

It is still the work of the women to supply the family with water. From this drudgery, however, the married women are exempted, unless when single women are wanting. The proper time for drawing water in those burning climates is in the morning or when the sun is going down; then they go forth to perform that humble office, adorned with their trinkets, some of which are often of great value. Agreeable to this custom Rebekah went instead of her mother to fetch water from the well. In the East Indies the women also draw water at the public wells, as Rebekah did on that occasion, for travelers, their cattle, and their servants; women of no mean rank literally illustrate the conduct of Rebekah by performing these services. The young women of Guzerat daily draw water from the wells and carry the jars upon the head; but those of high rank carry them upon the shoulder. In the same way Rebekah carried her pitcher; and probably for the same reason — because she was the daughter of an Eastern prince (v. 15). The natural thing for Eliezer to do was to come to one of these wells and await the coming of the women. Eliezer indicates a test by which he may recognize the woman intended for Isaac. He receives an immediate answer to his prayer (v. 45). Rebekah meets all

the conditions, and Eliezer thanks God. In the home the servant presents his errand, and brings forth a threefold argument:

1. Relationship. "I am Abraham's servant." These words would immediately attract the attention of his auditors. They knew Abraham.

2. Human interests. Abraham is very rich. "The Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and menservants and maidservants; and camels, and asses" (v. 35), and moreover Isaac is the only legitmite son who shall inherit all these things (v. 36).

3. Religious interests. See vs. 37—49.

Consent is given, and Rebekah has said: "I will go," and she follows the servant.

Rebekah's character is entirely different from that of Isaac. Quick of wit, and fertility of reason, characterizes her. She lacks the deep sense of spiritual truth, which we notice in Abraham and even in Sarah. Isaac is entirely different from Rebekah. His is a contemplative and conciliatory disposition. He would rather suffer wrong than engage in opposition to maintain his rights. To such a nature Rebekah was peculiarly suited; for in this eager, ardent, active spirit, Isaac's own retiring nature could find its appropriate stimulus. We read "that Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide, and he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, the camels were coming."

Isaac is mourning the loss of Sarah, his mother. No doubt Sarah was a tender mother to the child of her old age, and her only child. The loss of his beloved mother was no doubt the subject of his mournful meditation (v. 67).

When Rebekah beholds Isaac, she "lighted off her camels" — another instance of the energetic Rebekah. She sprang

quickly down from the camel as a mark of her reverence for Isaac, for she recognized him as a man of rank. This custom is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament (see 1 Sam. 25: 23; 2 Kings 5: 21). This was a custom among the Romans. In the East to-day, the rider descends from the animal he rides, when he meets a distinguished person. It is required of Jews and Christians when they meet a Mohammedan of rank. "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her."

N. T. HINTS.

Acts 10: 28; Ef. 1: 1—34.
Rebekah, type of Church; Rom. 8: 2—9—30.
See Math. 22: 2; Fil. 3: 14.

ILL.

Prayer, answered. On a certain occasion Luther was informed that Melanchton lay dying. He hastened to the sick-bed and found him presenting the usual premonitory symptoms of death. Mournfully he bent over him, and sobbing, gave utterance to a sorrowful exclamation. It roused Melanchton from his stupor. He looked up and said, "O Luther, is this you? Why don't you let me depart in peace?" "We can't spare you, Philip," was the reply; and turning round, he threw himself upon his knees and wrestled with God for upwards of an hour. He went from his knees, and took his friend by the hand. Again he said, "Dear Luther, why don't you let me depart in peace?" "No, no, Philip, we can't spare you yet," was the reply. He then ordered some soup; and when pressed to take it, Melanchton declined, again saying, "Dear Luther, why don't you let me go home and be at rest?" "We cannot spare you yet, Philip,"

was the reply. He then added, "Philip, take this soup, or I will excommunicate you." He took the soup. He commenced to grow better. He soon regained his wonted strength. When Luther returned home he said to his wife with joy, "God gave me my brother Melanchton back *in direct answer to my prayers.*"

CHAPTER XXI.

Genesis 25.

Death of Abraham—Esau and Jacob—Birthright—Isaac and Abemelech—N. T. Hints—Ill.

We come again to the parting of the ways. Abraham leaves 8 sons, but the story of the Bible is bound up with the story of the posterity of one of these only. Seth was chosen of Adam's children, later Noah was selected; — of Noah's children, Shem is selected; — of the Shemites, Terah is selected; and of Terah's children, Abraham is called; and so now with Abraham's children Isaac is selected and not the Ishmaelites, or Midianites, or any of the rest.

"Abraham died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people" (v. 8). Abraham had many faults, and they are not hidden in this true narrative. He prevaricated twice about Sarah, showing fear and weakness. Yet Abraham's faith for that age, — an age in which the world was falling into apostasy — was remarkable. But it was the covenant with God that made Abraham great. Through this he was to be a blessing to all the earth. In this Abraham represents the Church of God on earth — Chosen, and Called, and Saved.

God hears the prayer of Isaac, and Rebekah is about to become a mother. Before her twin sons are born, the elec-

tion of God is made known to her, "the elder shall serve the younger" — the younger of the twin brothers was to be the head of the chosen line. The birth of Esau and Jacob was the birth of two distinct nations, as was declared to Rebekah. From Esau sprang the Edomites, and from Jacob, the Israelites. A short character sketch of the two boys is given in v. 27. Esau, energetic, reckless and bold; a man of passion, and with little self-restraint, — reckless of consequence and with little sense of spiritual things. Jacob, on the other hand, was quiet, meditative, and of a deeply religious nature He had, no doubt, many times heard from the lips of Abraham, his grandfather, the great events of Abraham's life: his call from Ur, in Chaldea; the promises of God; the destruction of Sodom; the birth of Isaac and the story of the scene on Mount Moriah; and all this had sunk deep into the heart of Jacob.

The birthright belonged to Esau. But God had declared that Jacob should receive this right, for Esau was not a fit man for such responsibilities. Jacob could not await God's time, and he takes unfair advantage of his brother's physical needs, and forces a bargain with Esau.

In the East, it was generally believed that the first-born son was the strongest; and he was always placed over his brethren. To him the others must give great honor, and they must not sit in his presence without his permission, and then, only behind him. When the younger visited the elder, he went with great respect. He was not permitted to enter the door at the same time with the elder; he must always follow. At the approach of death, the father, calling his children, addressed the firstborn, "my strength, my glory, my all is in thee." The birthright involved many things:

1. The firstborn was to receive a double portion of the estate. (Deut. 21: 17.)

2. He had authority over his brethren. (Gen. 49: 3.)

3. To the firstborn fell the government of the family, or even of the kingdom. (2 Chron. 21: 3.)

4. As children of Abraham, to the firstborn was committed the great interests of the covenant with Abraham, that from his seed should issue the Messiah.

The birthright involved, therefore, heirship of the family, as prophet, priest, and king. Esau, as the head of the chosen people, in despising the birthright, despised God.

In the selling of his birthright for a mess of pottage Esau repeats, as we all repeat, the history of the Fall. Man's first sin was despising his birthright. The fruit of the tree was his "mess of pottage"; the friendship, the fatherhood of God, was the birthright he despised. Selling one's birthright for a mess of pottage, has come to be the established expression for every exchange of eternal treasures, honors, and hopes, for earthly, visible, and momentary pleasures. "As children of God, we have a birthright far more valuable than Jacob or Esau could dream of, and yet many sell their birthright for "a mess of pottage."

Ch. 26. Palestine was again subjected to one of those seasons of dearth, which have so frequently desolated the country. Isaac is compelled to provide pasture for his large flocks and herds. He resolved to follow the example of his father, and to seek a temporary asylum in Egypt. God forbids Isaac to go to Egypt. Isaac encountered in Philistia a similar peril to that which Abraham had met with in Egypt Isaac and Rebekah remain in Gerar, "and the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, "She is my sister"; for he feared to say, "She is my wife," lest the men of the place should kill me, for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon" (v. 7).

It was the practice of that dissolute and tyranic time to

deal with sojourners in the very fashion that Isaac feared. Rebekah was left unmolested, and Isaac was spared the mental agony, through which his father had passed.

Chapter 26 is the only exclusive chapter devoted to Isaac, who lived a quiet, contemplative life. This chapter is not a continuation of ch. 25. The contents of ch. 25, in order to set Esau's despising of the birthright side by side with the divine choice, leads us far beyond that which is dealt with in ch. 26. In this 26th chapter, Isaac and Rebekah go down to Gerar. They are apparently still young, at least there is no indication of the presence of their two sons. On the contrary, we may conclude that they are not yet born, since there is nothing to hinder Isaac from representing Rebekah as his sister.

N. T. HINTS.

Math. 22: 5.
Hebr. 12: 16.
Envy:
Math. 27: 18.
1 Cor. 13: 4.
Gal. 5: 19—21.

ILL.

Three Bad Bargains. (Ch. 25: 34.) A Sunday-school teacher remarked that he who buys the truth makes a good bargain. I inquired if any scholar recollected an instance in Scripture of a bad bargain. "I do," replied a boy, "Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage." A second said, "Judas made a bad bargain when he sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver." A third boy observed, "Our Lord tells us that he makes a bad bargain who, to gain the whole world, loses his soul."

2. Envy punishes itself. A Burmese potter, says the legend, became envious of the prosperity of a washerman and, to ruin him, induced the king to order him to wash one of his black elephants white, that he might be lord of the white elephant. The washerman replied, that by the rules of his art, he must have a vessel large enough to wash him in. The king ordered the potter to make him such a vessel. When made, it was crushed by the first step of the elephant in it. Many trials failed, and the potter was ruined by the very scheme he had intended should crush his enemy.

CHAPTER XXII.

Genesis 27.

Jacob Deceives his Father—The Blessing—Results of the Fourfold Sin—Character Sketch of Jacob and Esau—N. T. Hints—Ill.

From twenty-five to forty years pass away and in that time Esau no doubt forgot his bargain with Jacob or had no intention of carrying it out. The scene in the chapter brings before us Isaac feeble, and almost, if not totally blind. He is now 137 years of age. Luther correctly determines his age based upon the following calculations: "Joseph when he stood before Pharaoh was 30 years old (ch. 41: 46). At the migration of Jacob to Egypt Joseph was 39 years; for seven years of plenty and two years of famine had already passed Jacob at that time was 130 years (ch. 47: 9). Joseph was, therefore, born when Jacob was 91 years old, since Joseph's birth occurred in the fourteenth year of Jacob's sojourn in Mesopotamia. (Comp. ch. 30: 25 with ch. 29: 18—21 and 27.) Jacob's flight to Laban happened in his 77th year and in the 137th year of Isaac."

Isaac, feeling the infirmities of age, wished to devolve the

care of his family upon his eldest son, and proposes to bestow upon Esau the blessing which would make Esau the head of the family. The secrecy of the arrangement made by Isaac indicates a conscience not quite at rest. The preparation of the venison is an excuse to gain time and place for the secret act. Jacob is to be excluded from the scene of blessing. But Rebekah remembers the prophecy, and Jacob remembers the purchase of the birthright, and Isaac's cunning is met with still deeper cunning. From this point of view Rebekah's act appears in a different light, and woman's shrewdness crosses the shrewdly calculated project of Isaac. Isaac is caught in the net of his sinful prudence. Rebekah and Jacob, however, did not trust God, but took the matter in their own hands and conspired to deceive Isaac, which they did, and Jacob obtains the blessing (vs. 19—29). As Jacob came near to kiss his father, Isaac "smelled the smell of his garment."

The Eastern people are universally fond of having their garments strongly perfumed; so much so that Europeans can scarcely stand the smell. They use camphor, sandal wood or sandal oil, and a great variety of strongly scented waters In saluting they smell each other; and it is said that some people know their own children by the smell. Of an amiable man it is often said, "How sweet is the smell of that man! The smell of his goodness is universal." Thus when Jacob came near to his father we read, "He smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him and said, 'See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed'" (v. 27).

Esau returns from the field, learns of the deception and is first overcome with grief, then hatred fills his heart, and he resolves to murder his brother Jacob. A fourfold sin is committed. Each of the parties of this story sins.

1. Isaac sins in attempting to turn the divine purpose He wishes to bless Esau, his favorite son and firstborn, and he attempts to frustrate the design of God.

2. Rebekah sins in thinking that she must save the divine election of Jacob by means of human election and of pious fraud. "Isaac at that critical moment would have been far less able to pronounce the blessing upon Esau than afterwards Balaam could have cursed the people of Israel at the critical moment of its history. For the words of the spirit and of the promise are never left to human caprice."

3. Jacob sins because he also distrusts God and seeks by falsehood to accomplish the end. He could not await God's time. — David refused to kill King Saul, although the kingdom had been promised to him; he waited God's time. (1 Sam. 24: 1—7.)

4. Esau sins, for he had sold his birthright to his brother and swore away the blessing. It was now presumptuous for Esau to demand the blessing. His heart is also filled with hatred and he determines to murder his brother Jacob. — Esau does not repent of his sin, but of his loss.

The consequences of their sins can be briefly summed up in the following:

1. Esau lost his birthright and all that this involved.

2. Jacob lost his home, he must flee in fear from his brother.

3. Rebekah lost her favorite son, Jacob, and she never saw his face again.

4. Isaac lost his peace of mind, "for Isaac trembled very exceedingly" (v. 33).

The following is a very interesting character sketch of Jacob and Esau as given by Mr. Stanley: "In Jacob and Esau the good and the evil are so mingled, that at first we might be at a loss which to follow, which to condemn. But

yet, taking the two from the first to the last, how entirely is the judgment of Scripture and prosperity confirmed by the result of the whole. The mere impulsive hunter vanishes away, light as air. The substance, the strength of the chosen family, the true inheritance of the promise of Abraham was interwoven with the very essence of the character of the 'plain man dwelling in tents' — steady, persevering, moving onward with deliberate settled purpose, through years of suffering and of prosperity, of exile and return, of bereavement and recovery. On the one hand fickleness, unsteadiness, weakness, want of faith and want of principle, ruin and render useless the noble qualities of Esau; and on the other hand, steadfast purpose, resolute sacrifice of present for future, fixed principle, purify, turn to lasting good even the baser qualities of Jacob."

N. T. HINTS.

Rom. 9: 11—12.
Hebr. 12: 16.

ILL.

Falseness, in Character. Do you think of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unintended? Cast them all aside; they may be light and accidental, but they are ugly soot from the smoke of the pit for all that.— RUSKIN.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Genesis 28.

Jacob's Flight—Vision—Dreams—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Esau saw one way of obtaining the birthright. With his physical strength he could kill Jacob and the birthright would be his, — but Jacob flees. He leaves his home with

only his staff to walk with, and he pursues his solitary way, a distance of about 450 miles — a long, dreary, dangerous journey. A certain night finds Jacob upon the lonely hills of Bethel, where long before Abraham had raised an altar to God. He pillows his head upon a heep of stones and sleeps after a day's journey. A vision comes to him that night, and he sees a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven, with angels passing up and down, — and above all, he sees the awful form of the "Unseen." God renews the covenant of Abraham and Isaac with Jacob, and Jacob now learns that he shall be the inheritor of the patriarchal promises. When morning breaks, Jacob vows to serve God, and to give him one-tenth of all his gains.

There are several points of interest to be noted in this chapter:

1. Pillows of stones. It was no hardship for Jacob to take a stone for a pillow. The Syrians and Palestinians do it every night. Sleeping on the ground in the open air, where there is not even a bush for shelter, is the commonest thing in the world. Often from a pillow of stones come the grandest visions of the soul. Stephen, when stoned by a mob, saw the heavens opened and Jesus on the right hand of God. From a Roman prison, Paul saw his crown of righteousness. One may rest upon a hard pillow in peace, and have visions of heaven, and one may be tormented with evil thoughts on a bed of down.

2. Jacob's prayer. Jacob, alone, poor, banished, with a long and dangerous journey before him, is led to God. That night he prayed to the God of his fathers, and the visions came as an answer to prayer; for 28 years afterwards, he proposes to his family to go to Bethel, and build an altar there to God, "who answered me in the day of my distress." (Ch. 35: 3.)

3. Ladder. A towering elevation, as of several mountains heaped together, composed of ledges of rocks serving as steps or stairs by which it might be ascended to the top. Dr. Robinson, in his book "Bethel and Penuel," says: "We lay down near this spot and saw, down the beautiful valley, a vision that must have been the framework of the gorgeous spectacle the patriarch saw. The appearance was precisely that of a gigantic ladder, one end close by us, distinct at our feet, the other almost touching the sky."

The ladder connects heaven and earth, God and man; at the top of the ladder stands God. The ladder resting upon the earth expresses the love of God towards us. This vision is personified in Christ. Divinity, clothed with humanity, touches heaven and earth, and unites God and man. — Our religious life is a stairway from the earth to the heavens. "Beginning at the stony pillow of repentance, in answer to earnest prayer, its whole movement is heavenward, transfiguring earthly cares and sorrows, climbing step by step, with perpetual helps from above with aspirations, longings, prayers towards heaven and God, crowned with God's presence and promises, and at last, reaching God and home in heaven." The ladder of Jacob is the Church of Christ, as yet partly militant upon the earth, and partly triumphant in heaven.

4. Angels. The angels are first ascending, then descending. We have here the same arrangement of words as are found in John 1: 51, where Jesus says: "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." The angels of God had attended Jacob on his way to Bethel; they were around him when he stopped to rest for the night. They were ascending that those descending might take their places. The angels are the messengers and symbols of the reality of a personal intercourse between Jehovah and his people.

5. Vow of Jacob. — Jacob hears for the first time the voice of God. God was not unknown to Jacob, but his voice was. Jacob awakes from his sleep and vows, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go — then shall the Lord be my God. And I will surely give the 10th to Thee" (vs. 20—22).

The recognition of a systematic offering of the 10th to God's service is here noticed. Ever after, the descendants of Jacob were taught to consider that the tenth of their property was to be given to God as a token that he was the supreme possessor of all.

6. Dreams. — Dreams play an important part in the history of all ancient peoples. The Egyptians, as we shall see in the story of Joseph, attached the greatest importance to dreams. So did the Babylonians and the Persians. In "Homer" dreams come from Jove. Among the Hindoos dreams give a coloring to the whole business life. All dreams are of importance among the North American Indians. The Mohammedans believe that good dreams come from Allah and the bad dreams from the Evil One. The view of dreams, set forth in Scripture, pervading the Sacred Book, is that God sometimes makes known his will to man and discloses his purpose in dreams. We read in Job 33: 14—17: "God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." In this connection study Joel 2: 28; Acts 10; 18: 9, etc. God's voice in a vision is now not necessary, for "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, hath, in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." (Hebr. 1: 1—2.

N. T. HINTS.

Rom. 9: 13.
Ef. 2: 22.
Dreams:
Math. 1: 20; 2: 13.
Acts 16: 9; 27: 23—24.

ILL.

Heavens, astronomical. There is a saying of Hazlitt's, bold, and at first seeming wondrous true: "In the days of Jacob there was a ladder between heaven and earth; but now the heavens have gone farther off and have become astronomical." (Dawson.)

Give All You Can (v. 22). The late Bishop Selwyn used often to quote that motto of John Wesley's, "Save all you can and give all you save," and he did not think that charity began until after a tithe had been paid to God. "Whatever your income," he wrote once to his son, "remember that only nine-tenths of it are at your disposal."

CHAPTER XXIV.

Genesis 29: 31.

Jacob and Laban—Jacob's Family—Flight—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Jacob finally reaches Haran after a journey of 15 to 20 days, for Haran lay about 450 miles northeast of Beersheba. Walking at the rate of 30 miles per day he would reach his destination in 15 days. Jacob finds his cousin Rachel caring for her father's sheep. "Jacob rolled away the stone from the well and watered the flock of Laban, his mother's brother." Here we see Jacob, the clear-sighted, capable man,

who acts with decision. His is no weak or ignoble character. Laban soon learns to appreciate the value of Jacob's shepherd skill and hires him to stay and work for wages. The price of seven years' service was to be Rachel, the younger daughter of Laban. The love for Rachel has invested this strong capable man with a glory of childlike beauty and absolute sincerity.

The seven years represents the price which among the orientals was usually paid for a wife which was to be won. The custom still exists. Among the Bedouin Arabs the cousin has the preference to strangers, and the Druces in Syria always prefer a relative to a stranger. It is generally customary throughout the east, that a man marries his next cousin. He is not compelled to do so, but the right belongs to him, and "she" is not allowed to marry any other without his consent.

After Jacob's seven years' service Leah is given him instead of Rachel. Jacob had through fraud and cunning secured the place and blessing of Esau, the firstborn; now by the same deceit, the elder is given him in place of the younger. Jacob did not know Leah when he was married to her, just as his father did not know Jacob when he blessed him. Leah perpetrates the deceit at the instigation of her father, — Jacob at the instigation of his mother. But notwithstanding all this, Jacob received the wife designed for him by God, just as Isaac blessed Jacob unwittingly as the rightful heir of the promise. The words of Laban in v. 26 refer to another custom. Even in Egypt to-day the father sometimes refuses to give in marriage a younger daughter before an older one. But there is a sting for Jacob in Laban's reply. He emphasizes the right of the firstborn. Laban's offer calms the mind of Jacob. After Leah's week had been fulfilled, that is, the wedding feast of seven days, his mar-

riage with Rachel takes place. (See verses 27, 28.) The seven years' service for Rachel was rendered afterwards (v. 30).

Ch. 30. In this chapter the sons of Jacob are enumerated.

By Leah:	By Leah's Maid:
Reuben,	Gad,
Simeon,	Asher.
Levi,	
Judah,	
Issachar,	
Zebulun.	
By Rachel:	**By Rachel's Maid:**
Joseph,	Dan,
Benjamin.	Naphtali.

It has been hard to understand why Leah gave the name of Zebulun to her sixth son. The name gave the Hebrew scholars much trouble. The recovered language of Assyria and Babylonia has removed the difficulty. "Zabal" is an Assyrian word which means "to honor," "to be high in one's esteem." Zebulun means "to honor me" (not dwell). Leah now realizes that she has a place in her husband's esteem from which no one can remove her. — Jacob who was not Isaac's choice receives the blessing, and Leah, not the choice of Jacob, becomes the mother of him to whom the great blessing of the covenant was committed.

In the latter part of this chapter we find that Jacob uses his skill as a shepherd to insure his reward. He does not enrich himself by either theft or falsehood and keeps strictly to his bargain, but Laban's hopes are mercilessly laid in the dust. There was no duplicity in Jacob's relation with Laban during 14 years of his service; but now he meets cunning with cunning.

Ch. 31. Envy arises against Jacob, and the countenance of Laban has changed towards him, and life with Laban was becoming a serious trial. Jacob could no longer live in peace with him. Laban had been dishonest with Jacob and had changed his wages ten times. In some way God speaks to Jacob and summons him to return home. His present life was but an episode and a preparation. His true position was that of heir of the promises, the inheritor of the promised land, the channel for the kingdom of God. Jacob takes his family and all, and flees from Laban. Laban pursues and overtakes the fugutive at Mizpah, somewhere on the east of the Jordan. God intervenes between Jacob and the angry men of Haran, and Laban and Jacob make a covenant and place together a heap of stones which is to be a boundary line between the two. The wily Laban reminds Jacob that he has left the worship of his forefathers, and indicates that Nahor, and even Abraham, once worshiped the idols which Laban worshiped (v. 53). Jacob, on the other hand, swears by Jehovah in whom Isaac trusted from the dawn of his life to its close. "Jacob swears by the fear of his father Isaac." — Jacob's oath was thus a reply to Laban's.

The traveler in Palestine frequently remarks in the open country pyramidic piles of small stones of different heights. These, as I proceed to explain, have significations differing with their shapes. When they are from 5 to 6 feet high, and arrayed in a line with a certain regularity, they are meant to mark the spot where a battle has taken place between two hostile tribes. When, however, they are formed of 5 or more stones, and are placed on the boundary of some property, they signify that these litigants have come to terms and erected them in token of their agreement, and no one dares to remove these land marks. Sometimes small heaps surround fields, where the crops are growing, or have just been

reaped, or are placed upon the piles of logs or hewn timbers, signifying that they are private property, so that no one ventures to take them. I have no doubt that this custom was mainly derived from the ancient owners of the soil; for we find many instances of it in the Bible. Laban and Jacob raised a heap of stones as a witness of the covenant between them. Jacob, after his vision, took the stone which had served for his pillow "and set it up for a pillar." He that removes his neighbor's land mark is cursed. (Deut. 27: 17.) Joshua set up 12 stones in Jordan and 12 others taken from the bed of the river at Gilgal, in memory of the miracle wrought there for Israel. (Jos. 4: 9—20—22.) Again at the close of his life he "set up a great stone under an oak" as a witness unto the people, lest they should deny their God. (Jos. 24: 26—27.) (Pierotti.)

Rachel steals the image from Laban's home. She no doubt attributes to the images a certain magical power, though not a religious power. She steals them with the superstitious idea that she would prevent her father from consulting them as oracles, and with their help overtake and destroy Jacob. Laban had lapsed into a more corrupt form of religion, and Rachel, his daughter, had not escaped the infection.

N. T. HINTS.

Gal. 6: 7.
Acts 5: 1—8.
Children:
  Luke 1: 13—Answer to prayer.
  Math. 19: 13—19—Blessed by Jesus.
  Of the righteous:
    Acts 2: 39.
    1 Cor. 7: 14.

ILL.

Yearnings for Home. — "I long to see home," says the sailor when the ship rocks to and fro from the violence of the storm. "I am going home," thinks the shopman when he bars his heavy doors, and closes his windows at night, tired with the labors of the day. "I must hurry home," says the mother, whose heart is on her baby in the cradle. "Oh, how I long to get home!" says the school boy, disconsolate over the hopeless task. "Don't stop me; I am going home," says the bright-eyed girl skipping along the foot path. And "Almost home," says the dying Christian. "I shall soon be home, and then no more sorrow nor sighing forever. Almost home."

CHAPTER XXV.

Genesis 32; 33: 1—16.

Mahanaim—Struggle with God—Israel—Jacob and Esau—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Jacob leaves his uncle Laban, a chieftain of a clan, rich in camels, sheep, and oxen; with two wives and eleven sons. As Jacob journeys he beheld the angels of God, "who came to meet him" (v. 1). And he gave to the place where he beheld the angel the name Mahanaim. This word signifies two camps. There was thus another camp round Jacob's camp. The angels of God surround him and his. Laban's anger could not hurt Jacob, and Esau's wrath will also prove powerless to harm him.

As Jacob approaches his brother Esau, he sends word of his arrival and conveys his greetings. Esau sends no reply, but sets out to meet Jacob. The messengers speed back with

their evil tidings and Jacob becomes "greatly afraid and distressed." Remorse and guilt intensifies Jacob's anxiety and fear. He knew that he had wronged his brother and even 20 years of absence could not wear the fact away. The danger he left his home to escape is again before him. Esau is approaching. Jacob makes arrangements in which we mark for the last time the subtle abilities of this resourceful man. He sends his family over the brook Jabbock, and remains alone to commune with God. Jacob now turns to God. He feels that victory with God is victory with man; if he prevails against God he need not fear his brother Esau. A form confronts him and wrestles with him. Jacob soon realizes that he is face to face with one more than man. Nevertheless he does not let go his hold, but clings hopeless, yet determined, upon the form before him. We are told in Hos. 12: 4 that Jacob beseeches a blessing with tears and supplication. He receives a blessing and a new name of "Israel." There is mystery connected with "the man" with whom Jacob struggles. In verse 24 he is called man. In Hos. he is called an angel; in the 30th verse of this chapter Jacob calls him God. Man—Angel—God—none other than Christ, called by Malachi "the angel of the covenant," and who is God manifest in the flesh, is here struggling with Jacob.

The results of that wonderful struggle may be briefly stated as follows:

1. Jacob's name is changed, because Jacob was now a changed man. God teaches him that his greatest enemy is not Esau, but himself. Jacob is vanquished and Israel is born. Hitherto his character was made up of cunning and craft. Here is now Israel, a warrior or prince of God; a larger and more unselfish man; a larger and more useful man.

2. Jacob's weakness is turned into strength, for in his prayer he prevails as a friend of God. Touched by the Almighty, Jacob becomes weak; but when wrestling ceases, prayer begins, and then he prevails. When his body is weakened, his soul lays hold of God and he declares, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."

Jacob's prayer is a good example for us. We should pray when in trouble, but not only when in trouble, but always "Pray without ceasing," says the apostle. We should be alone with God. It is alone with God that he gives his richest blessing. We read of the mighty men of God alone with him in prayer; Moses at Mt. Sinai; Elijah at Horeb (Sinai); Daniel in his chamber, and St. John on Patmos. Every great soul has been alone with God and received revelations of the God of the universe. No one can spend a night with God and not be a changed being.

Names have their meaning, as may be seen from the following short table:

a—The believing Abram is changed to Abraham.

b—The praying Jacob is changed to Israel.

c—The chosen Simon is changed to Peter.

d—All believers—see Rev. 2: 17; 3: 12.

3. Peace to the heart of Jacob. The sun arose upon him, rose especially upon him, and with a joyful mind he begins with the sunrise his journey to meet Esau, his brother.

Esau comes with a pompous show of his forces, as a princely sheik of the desert with his retainers. Esau no doubt led a stirring life. Those 400 men of his, so suddenly called when he now goes to meet Jacob, had not been gathered about him for nothing. No doubt battles had been fought, victories won, possessions defended if not acquired. The scriptures drops a veil over the whole.

Chapter 33 describes the meeting between the two brothers.

"Jacob lifted up his eyes and beheld Esau come and with him 400 men." Jacob prepares to meet and greet his brother. Dr. Bonar gives us a delightful picture of eastern salutation, "Here comes another caravan of 20 camels at least—such a shaking of hands; foremost is our sheik, who advances to the old gray bearded—I cannot say gray headed (for who can see an Arab's bare head) sheik. Besharah from Sinai, probably the same who was Dr. Robinson's guide. The sheiks take each other by the right hand; then throwing the left around each others necks they kiss five times on either cheek. Then they inquire after the health of themselves and their friends. How like does this seem to the sons of Isaac. Here are the same four things—they run to meet, they embrace, they fall on the neck, they kiss. So in the case of Laban, "when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him." (Ch. 2: 13). Still more does the meeting of sheiks Suliman and Besharah remind us of Aaron and Moses. "He went to meet him in the Mount of God and kissed him" for this is the region in which the two brothers meet and their mode of salutation was the same. Esau ran to meet Jacob. He is overcome, his anger and threats are forgotten; the brother heart speaks. Jacob's heart, too, now released from fear, is filled with like affection, and in their common weeping these gray-headed men are twins once more.

N. T. HINTS.

2 Cor. 12: 9.
John 22: 21.
Luke 4: 28.

III.

Communion with God. There was each morning during his first sojourn in the Soudan one half-hour during which

there lay outside Charles George Gordon's tent a handkerchief, and the whole camp knew the full significance of that small token, and most religiously was it respected by all there, whatever was their colour, creed, or business. No foot dared to enter the tent so guarded. No message, however pressing, was carried in. Whatever it was, of life or death, it had to wait until the guardian signal was removed. Every one knew that God and Gordon were alone in there together.—Bishop of Newcastle.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Genesis 33: 17; 35.

Jacob's Journey—Dinah—Bethel—Death of Rachel and Isaac—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Jacob comes to Succouth. Weary and exhausted by twenty years of servitude and oppression, a flight of more than seven days, shattered by spiritual conflicts and lame in body, he pauses to rest, "and he built him an house and booths for his cattle." He remained here possibly six or seven years before the sad event recorded in the following chapter. From Succouth Jacob crosses the Jordan and enters the land of promise and settles in the neighborhood of Shechem. He pitches his tent before the city of Shalem. Continuing the traditional separation between the seed of Abraham and the people of the land, he does not enter the city but pitches his tent out in the open. Most likely from this place Jacob makes a visit to Isaac, his father, at Hebron, and brings back with him Deborah, his mother's nurse, who could relate to him the history of his mother, Rebekah. At Shalem he bought a parcel of land (v. 19). Tradition fixes this parcel

of land which, at the conquest of Canaan fell as an heritage to the sons of Joseph and in which Joseph's bones were buried (Josh. 24: 32), as the plain lying at the southeast opening of the valley of Shechem, where even now Jacob's well (John 4: 6) is shown and about two or three hundred paces north of it a Mohammedan "Wely" as the grave of Joseph.

DINAH.

Dinah broke through the wholesome custom of her house and treated the daughters of the Canaanites as if they were sharers of the faith and the hope of the called of God. The result is given in chapter 34. Pollution and shame to Dinah, and extermination to those who dishonored her. The sons of Jacob by ruse compel the men of Shechem to be circumcised, and on the third day, which was the critical day, Simeon and Levi slew all the males of the city (ch. 34: 25).

Among the Bedouin Arabs, the brother finds himself more dishonored by the seduction of his sister than a man by the infidelity of his wife. As a reason, they allege, "that a wife is not of the family, and that they are obliged to keep a wife only as long as she is chaste; and if she is not, she may be sent away, and is no longer a member of the family; but that a sister constantly remains a member of the family; and even if his sister became dissolute and was defiled, no body could hinder her from still being his sister." Niebuhr says: "I learnt at Bassa, that a man is not allowed to kill his wife, even on account of adultery; but that her father, brother, or any of her relatives were suffered to do it without being punished, or at least paying a small sum as an atonement, because her relatives by her had been dishonored; but that, after this satisfaction, nobody is permitted to reproach the family."

BETHEL.

God calls Jacob to Bethel, the place where his old vow was waiting to be redeemed. Jacob seems to understand what this call of God means. God calls him to cleansing and consecration and Jacob commands his household to put away all strange gods. "Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean and change your garments" — and the "teraphim" are put away. This purification was necessary, because they were now to remove to Bethel, the place of the outward revelation of Jehovah (v. 3). Jacob's journey in Canaan is almost the same as his grandfather Abraham's. He settled near Shechem as did Abraham, in the oak groves of Moreh (ch. 12: 6). He removed to Bethel as Abraham had done (ch. 12: 8), and now he comes to Hebron, which had been consecrated by Abraham as the seat of the patriarchal residence. As Jacob journeys, no one dare molest him; for, as a result of the genuine repentance in the house of Jacob, the blessing of divine protection rests over him, and fear fills the hearts of those who dwelt near Shechem, "and they did not dare punish Jacob" (v. 5). God accepts Jacob and his offering, the divine covenant is renewed, and again Jacob's name is changed to "Israel."

Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob, dies in childbirth. The wish she had uttered at Joseph's birth (see ch. 30: 24) that God would give her another son, is fulfilled. Benjamin is born. Jacob was about 106 years old and Rachel, at her death, was about 50 years. She dies during the final fulfilment of the strongest wish of her life. She was buried at "Ephrath which is Bethlehem." "Not far from Bethlehem a small solitary structure upon the open moor attracts the attention of the traveler. It is the tomb of Rachel. The present building has been recently repaired, and is now the property of the Jews, having been purchased by Sir Moses

Montefiore. It cannot be doubted that the tomb which it incloses is really that of the venerable mother of two tribes of Israel. Scripture all but identifies the spot. It is 'near Ephrath' and in the direct route from Bethel to that place The pillar placed upon the tomb by Jacob still remained when Moses wrote the book of Genesis (v. 20), and when the people of whom Rachel was the mother were already about to enter into permanent possession of the land. Josephus, in speaking of it, employs the more precise expression 'over against Ephrath'; suggesting the idea that down to his time the place continued to be well known. The evidences supporting the traditions amount as nearly as possible to a demonstration."

ISAAC.

This chapter also speaks of the death of Isaac. "And the days of Isaac were 180 years — and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him" (see ch. 49: 31). Isaac survived Jacob's return to Hebron 12 or 13 years, as is shown from the following chronology: Isaac was 60 years when Jacob was born (ch. 25: 26). Jacob was therefore 120 at his father's death. At his migration to Egypt Jacob was 130 years, therefore 10 years after the death of Isaac. But at that time Joseph was about 39 or 40 years (ch. 41: 46—47; ch. 45: 6). Joseph must have been sold immediately on Jacob's coming to Hebron, for Joseph was 17 years when he was sold into Egypt (37: 2) and 23 years elapsed between that and Jacob's migration. Jacob was therefore 107 or 108 years old when Joseph was sold. Isaac was therefore still living and shared the grief of Jacob over the loss of his son for 12 or 13 years. In a similar way Abraham had sympathized with the long unfruitful marriage of Isaac. But Isaac could see in these sorrows of Jacob the hand of God, who will not allow that

any one should anticipate him in a self-willed preference of a favorite son.

N. T. HINTS.

Acts 17: 16—29.
Rom. 1: 25.
1 Cor. 10: 14.
1 John 5: 21.

ILL.

Idol, still concealed. Chromatius, a heathen, sought a cure from one of the early Christians who was reported to have the gift of healing. As a condition thereto, he demanded that all the idols in his house should be brought. The heathen gave his keys to the Christian, who went about the house and destroyed all the idols he could find, and then went to praying for the desired cure. The sick man was as sick as ever. The Christian said, "There is yet an idol in your house which must be destroyed." The heathen confessed that he had one of beaten gold, which he wished to save. When it was broken Chromatius was healed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Genesis 36.

The Generation of Esau—N. T. Hints—Ill.

At the point, at which Esau passes out from connection with the Theocratic history, the history of his family is given, to be preserved in the memory of the people of God.

Esau's branch becomes a powerful and dominating one. Great kings arise, while as yet the descendants of Jacob are

in bitter bondage (Obadiah 12). But Israel yet remains, and is to be an heir of a grander history. But Esau is gone (Obadiah 18). Esau is blessed richly and he is blessed early. Esau changes his home and also his name, and breaks with the traditions of his father's house, and becomes as the people with whom he settles. No doubt Esau first preserved the patriarchal religion, but in a more external sense. He soon falls away from the true faith in one God, and sinks into idolatry (1 Kings 11: 1—8; 2 Chron. 25: 14) and moral depravity. The rapid growth of Esau's descendants is indicated in this chapter:

1. We have an account of the family of Esau, vs. 1—5.
2. The removal of Esau out of Canaan, vs. 6—8.
3. The names of those who became princes among the rapidly increasing people, vs. 15—18.
4. Further extension of the race is indicated from v. 30.

No doubt, out of the original descendants of opposing Edomite and Horite princes, there sprang one united kingdom, in which the Edomitic element predominated. The Edomites have now their kings, and become a great power in the land, with which the neighboring people have to reckon.

The names of the three wives of Esau are given in chapters 26: 34; 28: 8—9; and in this chapter.

1. Judith, daughter of Beeri, the Hittite.	Oholibama, daughter of Anah.
2. Bashemath, daughter of Elon, the Hittite.	Adar, daughter of Elon, the Hittite.
3. Mahalath, daughter of Ishmael.	Bashemath, daughter of Ishmael.

The difference in the names has been eagerly seized on by the critics and, of course, pronounced to be one of the mis-

takes of Genesis. Wellhousen says: "This is the most open contradiction in the whole Genesis."

Changes of names, as we learn from Genesis, were by no means of rare occurrence, and anyone unacquainted with the fact might draw misleading conclusions. If no explanation, for instance, had been given of the change made in the names of Jacob and Esau and we came suddenly upon "Israel" and "Edom" who were spoken of as being identified respectively with "Jacob" and "Esau," this would be seized upon as a glaring mistake of Genesis.

Anah is called Beeri in the earlier account. In v. 24 we have another notice of Anah. "This is Anah that found the hot springs (not mules) in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon, his father," and so he obtained the name of Beeri, "the man of the well." That designation, by which he, no doubt, was best known, did not belong to the genealogy. When the genealogy is referred to, as in the latter case where his father's name is recorded, the designation "Anah" under which he appeared in the list, is given. The change in the names of Esau's wives are too many to be due to mistakes of copyists, and they show no sign of mangling of words. The names in the first set are the names which the women bore when they were married. The names in the second set are those by which they were known when their families were grown up, and when their sons had taken their places as leaders of the rapidly increasing people. Such changes of names were customary in the East, in ancient times, and the custom endured down to a comparatively recent period. Nebuchadnezzar changed the name of Daniel and of his companions. Our Lord changed the names of his disciples. Sir John Chardin tells us of Persian customs (17th century): "I have seen many governors of provinces assume new names with their new dignity." Dr. Green in "The Unity of the

Book of Genesis" says: "Esau's wives, at their marriage, left their own tribes to become the heads of a new race; is it strange that they should adopt new names?"

See Urquhart, Bible, its structure and purpose.)

This narrative of Esau's has also its important use:

1. It shows how richly God fulfils his promises (ch. 25: 23; 27: 39—40).
2. It sets before the descendants of Jacob how far the boundaries of Esau's descendants reach.
3. The Israelites are forbidden to incroach upon them (Deut. 2: 4—5) except in relation to the Amalekies Ex. 17: 14).

N. T. HINTS.

Polygamy:
1 Tim. 3: 2.
Tit. 1: 6.

ILL.

Children — coming after us. A good story is told by Dr. Johnson of a father hearing the voice of his child behind him as he was picking his way carefully along the mountain side, "Take a safe path, papa; I'm coming after you." Ah — if older Christians, while passing along the rugged hill of life, would only remember that young Christians and children are coming on after them, how much more circumspect would they be concerning the path taken.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Genesis 37; 38.

Joseph—Partiality—Dreams—Midianites—Judah—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The story of Joseph is one of the most beautiful and touching stories of the Old Testament, and it is told with such admirable simplicity and pathos that is unsurpassed. All the incidents are grouped with a most telling effect until in the supreme crisis the final disclosure is made. Joseph is brought lower and rises higher than his fathers. Even Abraham seems to be outshone by Joseph's trust and fellowship with God. Joseph was born in far off Mesopotamia, the home of his mother. At the age of 6 years he met his fierce uncle, Esau (Gen. 33: 7). At Bethel he experienced his greatest boy sorrow, the death of his beloved mother, at the birth of his brother Benjamin.

Joseph's brethren were brought up during the worldly career of Joseph, when the home training and influences were not very favorable. Their relatives in Haran were idolators and they came thus in contact with an immoral heathen community. Their shepherd life removed them from all home and domestic influences. Joseph lived in a better atmosphere, received a better training from his mother. The years of his youth were spent under the influence of his grandfather Isaac, who could tell him many a story of the deeds of faith of his ancestors, which would make a powerful impression upon the boy. He became a God-fearing, bright and cheerful young man, trustworthy and good. In Joseph we find Abraham's dignity and capacity and Isaac's purity and Jacob's cleverness and tenacity. In Joseph we have one of the best characters set forth in the Scripture; free from the appearance of evil, a life singularly pure and trans-

parent. No wonder that his father loved and trusted him. But his brethren hated him; his pure life reproached them for their wickedness.

PARTIALITY.

Jacob enjoyed Joseph's presence more than that of his other sons. No doubt he had had more to do with his training, and Joseph was more of a companion to his father. And moreover, Joseph reminded his father of his beloved Rachel. Jacob wronged Joseph in showing his partiality. No parent or teacher should be partial. It is a sad and dangerous thing to be a favorite son, for one is very apt to be spoiled for life. Only the grace of God saved Joseph and kept him from ruin. His brethren hated Joseph. Joseph who had been allowed to join the pasturing expedition (v. 2) was painfully surprised and shocked at the evil conduct of his brethren. Having no one to whom he could unbosom himself, he turned to his father and so "Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." Jacob shows his love for Joseph in the gift "of the coat of many colors," but this very coat which expressed the mistaken favor upon Joseph is made the medium of deceiving Jacob and wringing his heart with grief. The coat was a mark of honor and authority, but it awakens a jealous hatred of his brethren. Again the dreams of Joseph disturb his brethren and awaken their fear and hatred. God spoke to Joseph through dreams and revealed his will. These dreams of Joseph are given and they shadow forth his coming power. He tells these dreams with a natural proneness of one member of the family to tell in the morning the dreams that one has had. These dreams showed forth God's favor and love in midst of trials from the hatred of his brethren. They were also to comfort him in bondage and suffering in Egypt. They were also a preparation for his work in Egypt

in interpreting the dreams of his fellow prisoners and of Pharaoh. In that age and clime dreams were regarded as disclosures from on high. Thus the second dream of Joseph oppressed Jacob and his sons, and Jacob felt it needful for the lad's own sake and for the fear of the home to rebuke him and "Joseph's brethren envied him" (v. 11).

Jacob learns that his sons are in Shechem and he fears for them, for he remembers what happened at Shechem. It was here that Simeon and Levi had committed that terrible crime (see ch. 34: 25—30). And so Jacob sends his trusty son to find out how matters were. Joseph seeks for his brethren and finally finds them in Dothan. Dothan lies about 12 miles north of Samaria, a beautiful section and historically interesting as in the later times Elisha lived in Dothan. The keen-eyed shepherds recognize him in the distance and they immediately plot to do away with him. "And we shall see what will become of his dreams" (v. 20). The sons of Leah join with the sons of Bilah and Zilpah. Reuben, the first-born, had committeed a sin in consequence of which the birthright was taken away from him. Probably the birthright was given to Joseph, the eldest son of Jacob's second wife, and that Jacob had manifested this intention by giving Joseph his coat of authority. Reuben becoming alarmed seeks to save Joseph. His suggestion is acted upon and Joseph is lowered in a bottle-shaped cistern, rendering it impossible for him to liberate himself. The coming of Midianites or Ishmaelites (the descendants of Ishmael, Medan, and Midian — these traders were called by all these names) suggested to Jacob's sons the sale of their brother. Syrian slaves were in considerable demand in Egypt. The fair complexion of the Hebrew lad would make him bring a high price in the slave market. Joseph would not be regarded as an ignoble captive, but as high and well born when

"stolen out of the land of the Hebrew." Joseph was sold. There was an affecting scene. Long afterwards the scene comes before the brethren. "We saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us and we would not hear" (ch. 42: 21). Joseph is carried to Egypt and Jacob mourns over his supposed death with a sorrow which refuses to be comforted. Jacob deceived his father and wronged his brother, the favorite of Isaac. He is now in turn deceived by his sons regarding him whom he most loved. Jacob did not see his father for many years. Joseph was to be shut out from the presence of his father.

Ch. 38. Urquhart says, that Judah is here presented as the second Israel in contrast with Joseph, the first Israel. Judah breaks with the patriarchal policy of separation from the people of the land. He takes up his abode with Canaanites, marries into a Canaanitish family, and selects a Canaanitish wife for his eldest son (vs. 2—6). The moral contamination is shown in the depravity of his children who fall under the judgment of God (vs. 7—10). The defilement envelops Judah himself and weaves the record of his shame into the history of his posterity. In chapters 37 and 38 two Israels are set side by side, two Israels in the family of Jacob; one pleasing to God, the other on account of sin displeasing to God. Judah is selected to show the contrast, and the after history of his descendants shows why just Judah was selected. Judah, after the fall of the northern kingdom and the captivity of the ten tribes, was identified with the Israelitish people, and is representative of those who were to reject Christ. Judah reminds us of David, the great hero of his family, with a rash and angry sense of justice he passes sentence without any thought that he is condemning himself just as David did when confronted by Nathan (2 Sam. 12: 5).

N. T. HINTS.

John 1: 11.
John 18: 37.
Acts 7: 9.
Heb. 7: 14.

ILL.

Envy, in Christian circles. The late Dr. Waugh, of London, being once present in a company consisting of nearly forty gentlemen, when a young man, who was then a student for the ministry, was entertaining those around him with ungenerous strictures upon a popular preacher in the city, he looked at him for a time with a strong mixture of pity and grief in his countenance. When he had by this manner arrested the attention of the speaker he mildly, but pointedly, remarked, "My friend, there is a saying in a good old book which I would recommend to your reflection: 'The spirit that dwelleth within us lusteth to envy.'"—WHITECROSS.

Guilt, cannot be wholly concealed. Potto Brown, the well-known philanthropist of Houghton, said of a man in his employ who afterwards was proved to be dishonest, that he had known him to be a thief for eighteen years. This conclusion was first of all arrived at by the shrewd miller because the culprit used to sigh whenever he received his wages. "Guiltiness", says Shakespeare, "will speak though tongues were out of use."—B.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Genesis 39; 40.

Joseph in Potiphar's House—Points in Joseph's Character—Joseph in Prison—Interesting Dreams—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The history from this point becomes the history of Joseph. Jacob and his sons are left behind us and we pass down to Egypt with the exile and slave. The Ishmaelitish caravan enters Egypt, and Joseph, together with many others, is exposed for sale in the market place. He is purchased, and enters the home of an Egyptian noble, Potiphar, a captain of the guard. From the simple pastoral life, Joseph finds himself among people of rank. The military caste in Egypt ranked next to the priesthood; and the entire force consisted of 410,000 men, who were divided into two corps, 1,000 serving each for a year as the king's bodyguard. Potiphar was a captain of one of these thousands, and consequently a man of great honor and influence. Joseph enters Potiphar's home merely as "a hand," but whatever this Hebrew boy did prospered. He became the admiration and wonder of the place. God is with Joseph. The divine blessing rests upon him and Potiphar sees that the hand of the Lord is with Joseph and places him at the head of the entire establishment. Gifts like Joseph's cannot be overlooked, and consequently his advance is rapid, until he rises to the highest post in the whole household. Potiphar feels that his household affairs are safer in the hands of Joseph than in his own, and so he turns everything over to Joseph (v. 6).

Every great Egyptian family places a chosen slave at the head of its establishment. On one of the monuments the steward is pictured as a much larger stature than the other servants and is called "Merpa" — chief of the house. This was Joseph's title. This was a great office. He had charge

of extensive possessions. On one of the tombs we find a recount of the possessions of one of these nobles:

405 oxen of one kind,
1,237 of another kind,
1,360 of the third kind,
1,220 calves of one kind,
1,138 of another kind,
1,308 antelopes,
1,135 gazelles, etc.

There were also cultivated gardens, numerous and splendidly appointed apartments. The furniture of the various chambers depicted on the monuments have supplied our modern upholstery with some of its choicest designs. The representations show that the apartments were filled with vases of all kinds in silver and gold, and with all sorts of eatables. Joseph has reached a great height, but God has something better for him and leads him through very strange ways to greater heights. Between Joseph and his greatest promotion lies the prison. How strangely sometimes God leads his people.

We now see Joseph struggling with temptation, but rising above it, and living a virtuous life. The Egyptian women were not secluded. They mingled freely with the men. They joined the men in concerts. The Egyptian women had rights which were fully acknowledged. She retained her own property and transmitted it to her children. In some genealogies the children take their mother's name in preference to that of their father. Joseph is tempted and severely tried constantly. "And it came to pass as she spoke to Joseph day by day." Every temptation made the test more severe, but Joseph is loyal to himself, to his master, and to his God. Joseph stands as one of the brightest exemples of purity and

virture given us in the Scripture. We can find no more inspiring instance than this in all the world's record. In Joseph, therefore, next to Christ, we have the world's great example of virtue and wisdom. Joseph's victory shows how a young man is to overcome temptation.

1. Let him walk in the presence of God.
2. Let him fight with the weapons of the Word.
3. Let him avoid the occasions of sin.
4. Let him exercise firmness in all things.
5. And if must be "flight."

A few notable facts as to Joseph's character are here given.

1. His goodness in youth at home.
2. His fidelity in places of trust. 39 : 6.
3. Resistance of temptation. 39 : 8.
4. Wisdom in administrating affairs. 41 : 48.
5. His love for his brethren. 45.
6. His godly character was the source of all. "God was with him."

The temptress becomes Joseph's bitter enemy, and accuses him with the very thing she failed to accomplish, and Potiphar casts Joseph into prison. Potiphar's wrath and mildness are indications that he had a presentiment of what the truth really was. The revenge of Potiphar's wife is satiated. Joseph in prison is not forgotten. He is trusted absolutely and everything is committed to him (v. 23). Joseph lost his liberty, but gained the divine favor, and when he entered prison he found God awaiting to bless and prosper him. What mattered it then to Joseph whether he was a prisoner or a prince, as long as God was with him?

Ch. 40. In this chapter we note the silent preparation for the great turning of Joseph's destiny. Joseph is happy even in prison. One day he meets the sad faces of his fellow pris-

oners, the king's butler and baker. They had had dreams during the night and there was no one to interpret the dreams for them. In Egypt dreams always had their significance. Joseph's fellow prisoners believed that they had received a message from the unseen, but as prisoners they had no one to interpret the dreams. The Egyptians paid such regard to dreams as to have a class of men devoted to the interpretation of all dreams. The numerous magical manuscripts show that all sorts of means were adopted in order to procure dreams and to obtain them from the gods, and especially from the god "Thoth" — the lord of divine words. Dreams were sought for by sleeping in special places, or by writing mystic sentences on small tablets and then placing them in the mouth of a black cat. Various plants and minerals are named as being useful in producing dreams. Joseph rejects the heathen art of interpreting dreams and tells the butler and the baker that the interpretation belongs to God. They tell Joseph their dreams. The dreams themselves are suggestive of their interpretation; the one bringing hope, the other despair. Joseph tells the butler: "Within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head." And to the baker he says: "Within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee." The ancients in keeping their reckonings or accounts of time or their list of domestic affairs or their servants, made use of tables with holes bored in them, in which they put a sort of peg or nail with broad heads exhibiting the particulars either number or name or whatever it was. These nails the Jews call heads. The meaning, therefore, of Pharaoh's lifting up his head is that Pharaoh would take out the peg, which had the cup bearer's name on top of it to read it and to examine into his accounts; for it seems very probably that both he and the butler had been either suspected of having defrauded the king and that, when

their accounts were examined and cast up, the one was acquitted, while the other was found guilty. And though Joseph uses the same expression in both cases, yet we may observe that, speaking to the baker, he adds: "Pharaoh shall lift up thy head from off thee," that is, shall order thy name to be struck out of the list of his servants by taking thy peg out of the socket. We may also note that kings of antiquity were accustomed to celebrate their birthdays. According to Herodotus this was the only day on which the kings of the Persians annointed themselves and gave presents to their subjects. This was also the custom in Egypt and continued down to the latest days of the Egyptian monarchy. The Rosetta inscription makes mention of the release of prisoners in connection with the royal birthday festivals.

Both dreams were fulfillled according to the words of Joseph. The butler walks out into freedom and favor and he forgets his promise to Joseph, and for two years Joseph is confined within the prison.

N. T. HINTS.

1 Cor. 10: 13.
Hebr. 2: 18.
2 Pet. 2: 9.
1 Cor. 12: 10.
2 Tim. 3: 2.

ILL.

Ingratitude, The World's. Socrates, one of the wisest and noblest men of his time, after a long career of service in denouncing the wrongs of his age, and trying to improve the morals of the people, was condemned to death and obliged to drink poison. Dante, when Italy was torn by political factions, each ambitious of power, and all entirely unscrupulous as to the means employed to attain it, labored with un-

tiring zeal to bring about Italian unity, and yet his pariotism met no other reward than exile. "Florence for Italy, and Italy for the world," were his words when he heard his sentence of banishment. Columbus was sent home in irons from the country he had discovered. The last two years of his life present a picture of black ingratitude on the part of the Crown to this distinguished benefactor of the kingdom, which it is truly painful to contemplate. He died, perhaps, the poorest man in the whole kingdom he had spent his lifetime to enrich. Bruno, of Nola, for his advocacy of the Copernican system, was seized by the Inquisition and burned alive at Rome in 1600, in the presence of an immense concourse. Scioppus, the Latinist, who was present at the execution, with a sarcastic allusion to one of Bruno's heresies, the infinity of worlds, wrote, "The flames carried him to those worlds."—M. DENTON.

CHAPTER XXX.

Genesis 41.

Pharaoh's Dream—Joseph Called from Prison—His Reward—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The dynasty to which the Pharaoh of Joseph belonged was a foreign one — "the Hycsos dynasty" — or the shepherd kings; from the words "Hyc" — king, and "Sos" — shepherd. According to Manetho, the shepherd kings kept possession of Egypt for 511 years and were then driven out. The Hycsos dynasty lasted at least 400 years. These Hycsos kings adopted the customs of Egypt. They take the name of Pharaoh, and surround themselves with all the customs of

the earlier monarchs. Brugsch in "The History of Egypt" says, "The arrival of Joseph in Egypt falls in the middle of the 18th century B. C., in the epoch of the second dynasty of the shepherd kings." It appears, too, that Apepi, the second, was the king who raised Joseph to his high dignity. According to a papyrus manuscript in the British Museum this Apepi chose the god Set as his god and served no other god. Why does he worship only one God? The 41st chapter gives us the answer. This one God had saved the land from a famine.

Two years pass since Joseph had interpreted the dreams of the butler and the baker as recorded in ch. 40. Then "King Pharaoh dreamed" and his "spirit was troubled and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof; and Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one that could interpret them unto Pharaoh" (v. 8). Then the butler remembered Joseph, and Joseph is called before Pharaoh.

The Egyptian magicians were also called "scribes," from the writing implements they carried. They belonged to the priestly class, and occupied themselves with the sacred art and sciences of their nation. They were concerned with hieroglyphic writings, astrology, the interpreting of dreams, foretelling events, and lastly magic. Delitzsch says, "They failed to interpret Pharaoh's vision, although they might have found a clue to it even in their own religious symbols." The cow among the Egyptians was regarded as the emblem of Isis, the goddess of the all-sustaining earth. The heifer, says Plutarch, is the symbol of the earth, of agriculture, and of nourishment. The Egyptian from his earliest infancy was taught to associate the ideas of agriculture and of nourishment with the cow. The cow was therefore the most fitting figure to the mind of the Egyptian, of a good or a bad har-

vest. The fat kine and the lean kine told their own tale to the king, the moment the key was supplied.

"Seven ears of corn (wheat)" is peculiarly Egyptian. The Egyptian wheat (Triticum Compositum) bears several ears upon one stalk. The dream of Pharaoh is thorougly Egyptian.

The preparation of Joseph to meet the king is also Egyptian. "And he shaved himself" (v. 14). Dr. Kitto says, "Carefully considered this is one of many passages in which the truth of the Scripture narrative is attested by an incidental and slight allusion to remarkable customs, which no mere inventor would think of noticing, or notice without explaining. Shaving was a remarkable custom of the Egyptians, in which they were distinguished from other Oriental nations, who carefully cherished the beard, and regarded the loss of it as a deep disgrace. This was the feeling of the Hebrews; but here Joseph shaves himself in conformity with an Egyptian custom of which this passage conveys the earliest intimation, but which is confirmed, not only by the subsequent accounts of Greek and Roman writers, but by the ancient sculptures and paintings of Egypt."

Joseph stands in the presence of Pharaoh, and the king relates his dream. Joseph informs the king that the interpretation of the dream belongs to God. Joseph is but an instrument in God's hand. "God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do." There is nothing, even in Scripture, that displays more fully the marvellous force of God-given inspiration than Joseph's reading of Pharaoh's dream. The palace-hall becomes a place for wonder and admiration. The prisoner becomes the king's councellor, telling the king what to do, and how to prepare for the coming years of famine. Pharaoh recognized the divine inspiration and says, "Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so dis-

creet and wise as thou art" (v. 39). Joseph lost his position over the house of Potiphar because he was faithful to God, and now he is rewarded with a position over the king's house and given a position next to the throne.

1. Joseph is given the greatest power in Egypt next to Pharaoh. "See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt" (v. 41).

2. Pharaoh gives Joseph his ring. This signifies a transfer to him of royal authority. It gave him power to seal his orders with the royal signet and to govern Egypt according to his will.

3. "He arrayed Joseph in fine linen." Fine linen was among the most precious things made in Egypt. Wilkinson mentions a sample of linen, "the number of threads in this was 540 in the warp and 110 in the woof."

4. New name, "Zapnath-pa-aneah — bread of life. A very appropriate name. Manville found a picture of Amenophis 3rd on his throne and before him a high official called "chief of the granaries of the whole kingdom," also "eyes of the king in the towns of the south and his ears in the provinces of the north," implying that he knew the land perfectly. Joseph thus becomes naturalized, and he now lives for the land of Egypt and accepts the wife given him by Pharaoh and makes Egypt his home. His chief concern is to prepare for the great crisis, which he does by storing up the grain in the years of plenty. Egypt was in the times of Joseph the most fertile country of the world. Magnificent reservoirs and well kept canals brought the water to every part of the land. The gift of the Nile was well understood, and every advantage was taken of it. The greatness of the yield, during the years of plenty is indicated in v. 49. This will explain why it was possible for Egypt to not only take care of its own people, but also of other countries (v. 57).

Joseph's family is also mentioned. Two sons are born to him. The first receives the name of Manasseh: "God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my fathers house." Joseph has been thinging of his fathers house, but God has given him a home in Egypt and he "thanks God that the memory of the loss of the old home life is swallowed up in the joy of this new home life.

Ephraem — Double Fruit — is born, and Joseph says," God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. Urquhart says," Joseph is the type of Christ. Manasseh the representative of the Gentile Church. In the joy of this the exiled Messiah has been made to forget his suffering and his rejection. But the reward of Jesus, like that of Joseph, will be complete. There will be a second birth; there will be in the progress of time a Jewish Church, and the truth of the prophecy of the name Ephraim — double fruit — will then appear."

N. T. HINTS.

Seven:

Acts 6: 3.
Rev. 1: 4—20.
Rev. 5: 1; 10: 3; 12: 3.

Famine:

Math. 24: 7.
Rev. 6: 5—8.

ILL.

(41: 9). Praying first. Two Christian men "fell out". One heard that the other was talking against him, and he went to him and said, "Will you be kind enough to tell me my faults to my face that I may profit by your Christian candour and try to get rid of them?" "Yes, sir," replied the other; "I will do it." The went aside, and the former said: "Be-

fore you commence telling what you think wrong in me, will you please bow down with me and let us pray over it, that my eyes may be opened to see my faults as you will tell me them? You lead in the prayer." It was done and when the prayer was over the man who had sought the interview said, "Now proceed with what you have to complain of in me." But the other replied, "After praying over it, it looks so little that it is not worth talking about. The truth is, I feel now that in going around talking against you I have been serving the devil myself, and have need that you pray for me and forgive me the wrong I have done you." Here and there in almost every community is a man or woman who might profit by this incident.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Genesis 42.

Famine—Joseph's Brethren in Egypt—Joseph Tests His Brethren —N. T. Hints—Ill.

From the previous chapter we learn of the extent of the famine: "Because the famine was so sore in all lands" (ch. 41: 57). A deficiency in the rise of the Nile caused the famine in Egypt. The lowness of the Nile was due to deficiency in the annual rains affecting a larger territory than Egypt, for all lands felt the dearth. In Palestine the harvest failed, and the pastures were burned up, so that the famine is felt by Jacob and his family.

In the eleventh century of our era, a seven years' famine occurred in Egypt and surrounding countries, lasting from 1064 to 1071. The people were reduced to terrible straits. Cats and dogs became valuable articles of commerce. Finally

the people consumed human remains. Organized bands of kidnappers infested Cairo, and by letting down ropes with hooks attached caught passengers in the streets and made food of their victims.

From the inscription in a tomb at El-Kab, Brugsch found the following: "The owner of the tomb, whose virtues, the inscription sets forth, was an official, named Baba, who served under King Sekenen-Ra. Sekenen-Ra was a vassal king, whom Apepi, the monarch whom Joseph served, suffered to reign at Thebes. This Baba says: "I collected the harvest as a friend of the harvest god. I was watchful at the time of sowing, and *now* when a famine arose lasting *many years* I issued out corn to the city each year of famine." This happened in the reign of Apepi, the shepherd king who was Joseph's Pharaoh.

Jacob learns that there is corn in Egypt. The sons of Jacob also know that there is corn in Egypt. But none of them dare suggest a journey to that land. Jacob sees that there is something troubling his sons, and so he says: "Why do ye look one upon another?" (v. 1). Their helpless and suspicious looking to each other seems to be connected with their guilt. The journey to Egypt, and the very thought of Egypt haunts them, on account of the sale of Joseph, their brother. But at last they journey to Egypt (v. 3), late indeed, but come they must. Even if it had been from the remotest parts of the earth. They were to come and bow down before Joseph. God's decrees must stand."

Joseph recognizes his brethren, but they do not recognize him, which is not strange, for the last place that they expected to see Joseph was on a throne. The brethren bow down before their brother, and the dreams come vividly back to Joseph, as he beheld his brethren "bowed down before him with their faces to the earth" (vs. 6—9).

Joseph does not at first reveal himself. He is shaken by a terrible suspicion. Why was not Benjamin among them? Had they also done away with him? And so he decided to test his brethren before he revealed himself. He accuses them of being spies: "Ye have come to see if the land is open — to see the nakedness of the land" (v. 9). There was at that time a genuine fear in Egypt for an invasion from the warlike tribes, from the very region from which Joseph's brethren came. The sending of spies before an invading force is a picture of the time. An inscription of King Horsiotef of the 26th century tells us that, when he resolved upon an invasion of the land of Makheti, he sent "spies to the number of 50 with horsemen." This fear was augmented on account of the plenty in the land of Egypt, and the famine outside its borders.

Joseph places his brethren in a position where they, in self-defense, are compelled to give a full account of themselves. And to prove their statements Joseph further tries them by placing them "all together into ward for three days" (v. 17), in order also to bring them to a sense of their guilt, and a true contrition. This dilemma brings back to them their sin, and they feel that the judgment of God is now fallen upon them. "And they said to one another: 'We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (v. 21). A guilty deed will fasten itself upon the soul and live through many years. These men had not forgotten these many long years "the anguish" of Joseph. That beseeching face is fresh in their memory. "He who depends upon his power of forgetfulness in the commission of a crime, will be amazed to find how retentive the soul is, and how it refuses to let go of itself." Joseph listens to their confession

and witnesses their contrition — and he weeps. "How like him, who in the agony of an atoning death, prays for his persecutors, "Father, forgive them."

Joseph again tests his brethren. "If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison, — but bring your youngest brother unto me, so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die" (vs. 19—20). "And they did so." Simeon, whom his father called the self-willed, cruel, fierce in anger (ch. 49: 5—6), is kept in prison, as the one who most needed discipline, and doubtless the one who was fiercest toward Joseph, — and the others return to their father.

N. T. HINTS.

Math. 12: 1.
Mark 2: 23—28.
Rom. 5: 3—4.
2 Cor. 4: 17.
1 Pet. 1: 7.

ILL.

Adversity not always an evil. Grecian mythology said that the fountain of Hippocrene was struck out by the foot of the winged horse Pegasus. I have often noticed in life that the brightest and most beautiful fountains of Christian comfort and spiritual life have been struck out by the iron-shod hoof of disaster and calamity.—Talmage.

Fear of God, civilizing influence of. (v. 18). A weary day had been passed in visiting a wretched neighborhood. Its scenes were sad, sickening, repulsive. Famine, fever, want, squalid nakedness, moral and physical impurities, death, and the devil were all reigning there. Those only, who have known the sinking of heart which the miseries of such scenes produce, especially when aggravated by a close and

tainted atmosphere, can imagine the grateful surprise with which, on opening a door, we stepped into a comfortable apartment. Its whitewashed walls were hung round with prints, the household furniture shone like a looking glass, and a bright fire was dancing merrily over a clean hearthstone. It was an oasis in the desert. And we well remember ere question was asked or answered, of saying to ourselves, "Surely the fear of God is in this place; this must be the home of a church-going family." It proved to be so. Yet it was a home where abject poverty might have been expected and excused. A blind man dwelt there.—GUTHRIE.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Genesis 43; 44.

Again in Egypt—Benjamin—Judah's Prayer—Judah and Christ—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The supply of corn was soon exhausted and the "famine was sore in the land," and Jacob and his family were facing the same problem as before. Jacob therefore calls upon his sons to go to Egypt again. Judah sets forth the condition: Benjamin must go with them. Jacob is in the midst of perplexities. The demand for Benjamin's presence in Egypt falls upon Jacob's heart as a presage of fresh calamities, and he holds out as long as possible. But finally the straitness of famine compelled him to let Benjamin go with his sons to Egypt, and he is committed to Judah's care. Judah stands forth in this chapter as a principal personage, with dignity and firmness, and unselfish heroism. He will be surity for Benjamin and take the guilt and bear the blame forever.

The sons of Jacob are in Egypt for the second time. Their hearts are filled with fear because they are brought into the house of Joseph. They speak with the steward of the house and explain how they found the money in their sacks. From the reply of the steward it would seem that Joseph had instructed him as to his part, and what he should say to the brethren.

Notice the contrast between Joseph and his brethren — Joseph even in prison had a free conscience — the brethren — free from prison — are under the sentence of conscience; — Joseph had no fears, because he was guilty of no wrong; the brethren were full of fear, because they were guilty of a wicked deed; — Joseph could see in the strange events the hand of God; — the brethren could only see the judgment of God. "'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all."

The brethren are again before Joseph, and bow down "and make obeisance." "And Joseph lifted up his eyes and saw his brother — Benjamin, his mother's son" (v. 29). What a touching scene! All the memories of home return to Joseph. He can see his aged father in suspense for the safety of his sons; — Benjamin his own full-brother, 7 years younger than himself, stands before him. His heart is filled with love for his brethren and he longs to take them in his arms, but the time had not yet come. Yet he must give way to his feelings, "and he sought where to weep; and he entered his chamber and wept there" (v. 30).

The interest in the study of Joseph's character increases from point to point in this wonderful narrative. Joseph is one of the grandest characters that ever lived. Egypt never again had such a ruler. Joseph invites his brethren to dine with him and the tables are set. There are three different tables: one for Joseph, one for Joseph's brethren, and one for the Egyptians. Joseph's great dignity and office made

separation in his case a necessity. A reason is also given (v. 32) in the case of the Egyptians. The Egyptians regarded every foreigner as impure. Herodotus was struck by this rigid seclusion in this respect. They would not use a Greek knife or plate, nor taste meat which a Greek knife had touched. The brethren "marvelled one with another" when they were placed at the table — "the first-born according to his youth" (v. 33). Benjamin receives five times as much as any of the others. This is also an important point in the "proving" of his brethren. It is an imitation, so to say, of the coat of many colors. It would determine whether Benjamin was to become an object of their jealousy, just as his father's present had before been to him the cause of their hatred. This five-fold portion was also mark of respect. To the guest who was to be distinguished, there were given at a meal the largest and the best pieces (1 Sam. 9: 23). Among the Spartans, the king received a double portion. Among the Cretans, the Archon received four times as much as any other. Five was the favorite among the Egyptians.

Ch. 44. Joseph had one more test for his brethren, and this was to be the supreme test. He was to test their disposition towards their brother Benjamin. — After they had departed, Joseph ordered his steward to pursue them, and instructs him as to what he shall say to them. The brethren of Joseph become terrified by the tidings that a robbery had been committed, and that suspicion had fallen upon them. The ruler has lost his divining cup, and he suspects these men. The sacks are set down and opened. Each man's money is found in the sacks; but they despair when the cup is found in Benjamin's sack. The men had now a chance to commit Benjamin to Joseph as a prisoner, as he had been sold to the merchantmen. But these men had changed, and they all return to Egypt, and enter Joseph's house.

Divining by cups was a common practice in Egypt. The divining vessel was also used in Babylon. It can be met with in Egypt even to-day. Pliny tells us that Emperor Nero practiced this form of magic. There were two ways by which the cup was used: First they poured clean water into it, and then looked into the water for representations of future events. Again they filled the vessel with water, and then dropped into it pieces of silver and gold, or precious stones. The forms into which they arranged themselves were noted and intimations were drawn from them as to coming events. Joseph is playing the roll of an Egyptian ruler, and adopts for the time being this Egyptian custom.

Judah becomes the spokesman for the brethren. He is the eloquent one among his brethren. His eloquence had carried the measure of Joseph's sale; it had prevailed on Jacob to send Benjamin with them; and now it was to compel Joseph to reveal himself. Judah stands before us in this his marvellous prayer, of unsurpassed simplicity, and touching pathos; in his self-humiliation, and in his self-sacrifice, equal with Joseph, and of as true nobility of soul. Kalish says: "This prayer is one of the masterpieces of Hebrew composition." Luther says: "I would that I could pray so well to our Lord God, as Judah prays here to Joseph, for it is a perfect example of prayer and of the earnestness which should be in prayer."

We may with profit note the similarity between Judah and Jesus, our Saviour:

	JUDAH.	JESUS.
1.	Anxiety for the child the father loved.	Of the tribe of Judah, loved the Father's race.
2.	Judah becomes surity for Benjamin.	Jesus the believer's surity.

3.	Judah's great intercession.	Jesus intercedes for us.
4.	Judah prays to be a substitute.	Jesus becomes our substitute.
5.	Benjamin's future adherance to Judah.	The love of the Church for Christ her Saviour.

In after-times Benjamin becomes a wild and haughty tribe. It was deeply humbled in the days of the Judges. In the opposition of Saul and David it becomes Judah's rival. Later it becomes Judah's faithful confederate. In the New Testament time, Paul, its great descendant, connects himself in faithful devotion with *"the lion of the tribe of Judah."* ...

N. T. HINTS.

Weeping:
Luke 19: 41.
John 11: 35.
Math. 26: 27.
Sorcery:
Acts 8: 9—11; 13: 8.
Math. 24: 24.

ILL.

The chief speaker. In India a company of people have always some one among them who is known and acknowledged to be the chief speaker; thus should they fall into trouble, he will be the person to come forward and plead with the superior. He will say: "My Lord, I am indeed a very ignorant man, and am not worthy to speak to you: were I of high caste, perhaps my Lord would hear me. May I say a word or two?" Some of the party will then speak in an encouraging tone, "Yes, yes, our Lord will hear you." He then proceeds: "Ah, my Lord, your mercy is known to all; great is your wisdom; you are even as a king to us: let, then,

your servants find favor in your sight." After this introduction, like Judah, he relates the whole affair, forgetting no circumstance which has a tendency to exculpate him and his companions; and everything that can touch the feelings of the judge will be gently brought before him. As he draws to a conclusion his pathos increases, his companions put out their hands in a supplicating manner, accompanied by other gesticulations; their tears begin to flow, and with one voice they cry, "Forgive us this time, and we will never offend you more."

Prayer, confidence in. At the time the Diet of Nuremberg was held Luther was earnestly praying in his own dwelling; and at that very hour when the edict granting free toleration to all Protestants was issued, he ran out of his house crying out, "We have gained the victory."—THOLUCK.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Genesis 45; 46.

Joseph Reveals Himself—Sends for Israel—Israel at Beersheba —Father and Son—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The brethren had nobly stood the test. Judah's eloquence is overpowering and Joseph could not refrain himself. "And he wept aloud. And Joseph said unto his brethren, 'I am Joseph.'" The natural voice, the native tongue, the long-remembered features would all at once strike the apprehension of the brethren. But the memory of the wrong they had done him also comes before them, "and they were trouble at his presence." It was impossible for Joseph to evade allusion to their early wickedness and in tender charity he says, "I am Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt," but he

also adds, for now he understands God's ways with him, "God did send me before you to preserve life." — "There is a divinity that shapes our end, rough-hew them how we will."

"To blind old Milton's rayless orbes
A light divine is given,
And deaf Beethoven hears the hymns
And harmonies of heaven."

"And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them; and after that his brethren talked with him." They were now at rest and they could tell the thousand things Joseph wished to know about them.

Joseph sends for his father and urges his brethren to tell him of all his glory in Egypt. These words of Joseph are not uttered in pride. Joseph desires to assure and comfort Jacob his father and also to make it easier for the ten sons to confess the crime and deceit of the past. Jacob received the news of Joseph, but he could not believe it. It was too good to be true. "And his heart fainted." But when he saw the Egyptian's wagons and heard the words of Joseph, he became convinced and his spirits revived.

The wagons of the Egyptians, as pictured on monuments, were rather carts with only two wheels. They were used in Egypt where the country was level, but were probably then unknown in Palestine, which was rough and hilly. These carts were not likely to be obtained except from some great landowner. They would, therefore, be a seal of the truth of the story, and a symbol of Joseph's glory. And Jacob believed. "It is enough — I will go." The old man is again young in spirit. "Jacob's spirit revived and Israel spoke." How significant this change of name.

Israel took up his journey with all he had and came to

Beersheba and offered sacrifice unto the God of his father, Isaac. He seeks light and divine sanction for his journey. Isaac had once contemplated a journey to Egypt, but God had forbidden him to go, and so Jacob goes to the home of Isaac, and offers sacrifice to the God of Isaac. God comes to Israel in a night vision and tells him to go and gives him four great promises:

1. Jacob would in Egypt become a nation.
2. God would be with him.
3. The nation would return to the land of promise.
4. Jacob would remain with Joseph to the end. "Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" (v. 4).

Jacob continues his journey. There are 70 souls of Jacob's house and doubtless many servants and dependants, making quite a caravan. When St. Stephen speaks of Jacob's journey (Acts 7: 14) he gives the number as 75. The difference is simply that he quotes from the Greek version which includes in the number five descendants of Joseph not mentioned in the Hebrew text.

The different instances of going to Egypt may be here briefly noted:

1. Abraham:

   On account of famine.
   Went without divine direction.
   Got into serious trouble.

2. Isaac:

   On account of famine.
   Was on his way to Egypt.
   Was divinely prevented.

3. Jacob:
   On account of famine.
   Was divinely directed.
   Was promised the divine presence.
   Would return as a great nation to the promised land.

Joseph goes forth to meet his father (v. 29). And there is a true oriental meeting of the two, father and son. The much afflicted patriarch is clasped in the arms of his long lost son. This is one of the affectionate scenes of the Old Testament. It is simply told. "And wept on his neck a good while" — the tenderness of the meeting would correspond with the bitterness of the many years of separation.

Joseph is careful to instruct his brethren about reporting themselves to Pharaoh as shepherds, although this would make them hated by the Egyptians. 'For the shepherds were an abomination unto the Egyptians;" — not on account of the raising of cattle, for the Egyptians themselves raised multitudes of cattle and considered some of them even sacred. But probably on account of the wandering tribes on the borders of Egypt, and who were never entirely subject to the dominion of the Pharaohs. Joseph so instructs his brethren for the following reasons:

1. The Pharaoh of Joseph was one of the shepherd (Hycsos) kings and would therefore have a feeling of kindness towards them.

2. This would make the king see the expediency of a assigning to them a district which would prevent close contact with his Egyptian subjects.

3. This would be a means of preserving Israel as a whole.

N. T. HINTS.

Math. 14: 2.
John 8: 9.

Acts 9 : 10.
1 Cor. 2 : 9.
Rev. 2 : 10.

ILL.

God, a shield. "Do you see this lock of hair?" said an old man one day to a friend. "Yes, but what of it?" I suppose it belongs to some dear child who is now in heaven." "No," said the old man; "it is a lock of my own hair, and it is now nearly 70 years since it was cut from my head." "But why are you so careful about a lock of your own hair?" asked his friend. "I keep it because it reminds me of the wonderful care that God takes of his people. I was a little boy of 4 years old, with long curly, golden locks. One day my father went into the woods to cut up a log, and I went with him. I was standing on one side, watching with interest the strokes of the heavy ax, as it went up and came down upon the wood. Some of the splinters fell at my feet, and I stopped to pick them up. In doing this I stumbled and fell forward, and in a moment my curly head lay upon the log. I had fallen just at the moment when the ax was coming down with all its force. It was too late to stop the blow. Down came the ax. I screamed; my father fell to the ground in terror. He could not stay the stroke; and in the blindness which this sudden horror caused, he thought he had surely killed his boy. We soon recovered — I from my fright and he from his terror. He caught me in his arm and looked at me from head to foot to find the wound which he thought he must have given me. Not a scar was to be seen. He knelt down upon the grass and gave thanks to God for this wonderful preservation. Then he took up his ax, and looked at it, and found a few hairs upon its edge. He turned to the log he had been splitting, and there was a single lock of his boy's hair. It was sharply cut through, and laid upon the log. *This was the lock."*

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Genesis 47.

Joseph Presents His Father and Brethren to Pharaoh—Jacob's Review of his Life—Joseph's Statesmanship—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Joseph first introduces five of his brethren to Pharaoh, and they are given positions of trust under the King. Then Joseph introduces his aged father to Pharaoh. Again Joseph shows the nobleness of his character. He is not ashamed of his father, but rather with honorable pride, presents him to Pharaoh and to his Courtiers. No doubt Jacob appeared to them as a rude and semi barbaric rustic, a man unacquainted with court etiquette, and yet Joseph's face beams with love, as he brings his father before the King. We have here a beautiful illustration of the fourth commandment, which was given on Sinai, many years later.

Jacob, in reviewing his life, speaks of it as a "pilgrimage from birth to death," and the days of this pilgrimage, as "few and evil." There is sorrow and joy, strife and peace, in the life of this Patriarch, as may be noted from the following:

1. Sins of Jacob:
   - He deceives Esau.
   - He deceives Isaac.
   - He is partial to Joseph.

2. Sorrows of Jacob:
   - Driven from home.
   - Persecution of Esau.
   - The injustice of Laban.
   - Lameness of Jacob.
   - The violation of Dinah.

The loss of Joseph.
The conduct of his sons.
Death of Rachel.
Departure of his sons with Benjamin for Egypt.

3. Blessings of Jacob:
A good home.
Isaac's blessing.
Vision at Bethel.
The promises of God.
Prosperity.
Long life.
The advancement of Joseph.
Peace at old age.

Jacobs life is now drawing to a close; — a life strangely contradictory; — with a mingling of the false and contemptible with the true and the Godly. His last 17 years of life are spent in peace and rest with Joseph. He is thus compensated for the sorrow through which he had passed, and now, as his life is drawing to a close, he requests, that he may be buried with his fathers in Hebron. Jacobs faith is shown in this request, namely — that his children would possess the land of Canaan, as Jehovah had promised. (Vs. 29—31).

Joseph's great statesmanship is shown in vs. 14—26. He is acting as Pharaohs servant. He first sells corn to the people for money, and when money fails, he gives corn for their cattle, vs. 15—17. The famine continues, and the people come again to Joseph, and they come with their own proposition (vs. 18—19), to which proposition Joseph agrees. — The government of Egypt was Paternal. The king was Father. The whole of Egypt was his household. Therefore the compact was not so one-sided, as a like transaction would

be between the government and the people of this country. We notice that the people are grateful; to them it is an unexpected deliverance, and they cry: "Thou hast saved our lives."

The rent that Joseph exacted is extremely reasonable. A tax of one fifth is small in a fertile land like Egypt, where the harvests are from 30 to a 100 fold. In Palestine, to-day, the cultivater pays one fifth as rent for the land alone. If, on the other hand, the landlord supplies cattle and seed, he gets four fifths, while the cultivator only gets one fifth; hence the joy of the Egyptians. (Vs. 24—25). They received three times more from Joseph than the people of their position receive from the landholders of Palestine to-day. Joseph gave the Egyptians an opportunity of regaining their former wealth and luxury.

The taking of the land was also important for the preservation of Israel in Goshen. Israel had come to dwell in the land and it was essential that there should be a strong and stable government. The arrangement that Joseph made (v. 21) was a new beginning, not only for the individual, but also for the state. Joseph's course consolidated the state into one strong nation breaking up the petty influences of the Nobles, which up to this time, had probably been a great cause of its weakness. The country was divided into many districts or provinces, in consequence of which, the supreme power was comparatively feeble. Compare the Germany of the present day, consolidated into a kind of United States, with the dangers, difficulties, contentions of its former divided condition — as in the 30 years war, — into some 300 different dominions, — and you have a picture of Egypt, before and after the arrangements made by Joseph. (Urquhart).

N. T. HINTS.

Luke 2: 34.
Rom. 1: 7.
Heb. 13: 20.
Rev. 22: 21.
2 Tim. 1: 5.

ILL.

1. Comfort, Absence of. Goethe, the greatest of German poets, whose long life was one long success, said: "They have called me a child of fortune, nor have I any wish to complain of the course of my life. Yet it has been nothing but labour and sorrow; and I may truly say, that in 75 years I have not had four weeks of true comfort. It was the constant rolling of a stone that was always to be lifted anew."

2. Eternity, Where spent. A minister was dying, and he called his son, who was a thoughtless lad, to his bedside. "Tom," he said, "will you promise me one thing before I die? I only ask that, when I am gone, you will go every evening alone for fifteen minutes and say, 'What is eternity? and where shall I spend it?'" The promise was given, and faithfully kept. At first the lad thought little of the words; but he went on doing as he had promised, until at last he was not able to face the awful question any longer, and gave himself to Christ.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Genesis 48; 49.

Israel Blesses Joseph's Sons—Prophecies Concerning the Sons of Israel—Shiloh—Israel's Death—N. T. Hints—Ill.

The time had arrived when Jacob was to die, and tidings is sent to Joseph, who at once sets out for Goshen, taking

his two sons with him. Israel adopts the two sons of Joseph. "Ephraim and Manasseh are mine." Joseph shall thus be represented by two of the leading tribes of Israel.

The imposition of hands was a Jewish custom, practiced whenever prayer to God was offered for any person, and also employed as mark of favor. The Priests attended to the same practice, when anyone was received into their body. Our Saviour observed the same custom, when conferring his blessing on children; but when healing the sick, he sometimes added prayer to the ceremony. The Apostles likewise, laid hands on those upon whom they bestowed the Holy Ghost; and they themselves underwent the imposition of hands afresh, when entering upon any new duty. In the ancient church, imposition of hands was even practiced on persons when they married, and the same custom is observed by the Abyssinians.

Joseph places Manasseh, the elder, at the right hand of his father, and Ephraim, the younger, at his left hand. — Among the Hebrews the right hand was the place of power and precedence. (1 Kings 2: 19). Israel crosses his hands and places his right hand upon the head of Ephraim and his left upon that of Manasseh. Joseph is displeased at this, and seeks to change the hands of Israel (vs. 17—18), but Israel is firm. The blessing of Israel is also a prophecy. The subsequent history of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh shows that Israel, like the other *prophets,* "spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Pet. 1: 21). The prophecy began to be fulfilled from the days of the Judges, although, in the time of Moses, Manasseh still outnumbered Ephraim by 20,000. (Numb. 26: 34—37) But the descendants of Ephraim became the leading tribe, next to Judah; so that all northern Israel was sometimes called Ephraimites.

God sometimes prefers the younger to the elder, as in the

case of Shem over against Japhet, Abraham over against Nahor or Haran, Jacob to Esau, Judah to Ruben, Moses to Aaron, and David, who was preferred to all his brethren.

Israel now calls his own children in order to give them his blessing, and to prophecy concerning their future. He sketches in grand outline the tribes represented in their head. The prophecies are remarkable; the following especially noteworthy:

1. Reuben losses his birthright. (Ch. 35: 22). He is incapable of selfcontrol "unstable as water." The future history of the tribe is unimportant. Just a small portion of the land east of the Jordan was allowed to it. Reuben lost his birthright through a sinful act. So did Esau. We may lose in a moment the richest blessings of life and never regain them.

2. Levi and Simeon are punished for their cruelty, which they inflicted upon Hamor and Sechem (Gen. 34: 25). They are separated and scattered among the rest of the tribes (v. 7).

3. The most remarkable prophecy is concerning Judah. The birthright of sovereignty is taken from Reuben and is given to Judah. And from Judah "shall Shiloh come."

"Thy father's children shall bow down before thee." Judah becomes the leading tribe from the first. From the second king of Israel, up to the time of the Babylonian captivity, the sceptre had not passed from Judah. The 10 tribes utterly lose their national identity, but not so Judah. Even during their captivity, Judah remained a distinct people, having their own governors. After Solomon's time, this tribe becomes the center and soul of the Southern kingdm, giving its name to it. After the destruction of the Northern kingdom, the name "Judah" was applied to the Jews everywhere. Judah becomes the royal tribe. All the

leading kings come from Judah. The royalty of Judah was, however, fulfilled in Shiloh" — in "Jesus;" who is the "lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5: 5). Judah shall remain "until Shiloh comes." Over against this prophecy stands this fact in history; namely, that, with the brief exception of the stay in Babylon, the tribe of Judah maintained its existence from the beginning of Hebrew history, under Persians, Greeks, and Romans, until the overthrow of Jerusalem by Titus. But *Shiloh* had come. After the crucifixion of *Shiloh* — "the Prince of Peace" — the sceptre was taken from Judah — "a marvellous fulfillment of a marvellous prophecy."

This is the closing scene of Israel's life. He desires to be buried in Canaan. This is not only a natural desire — to be buried beside his fathers — but it also indicates his faith in the promise of God. Israel, like Abraham, saw the promise afar off. — Through all the storms of sin and sadness, the hand of God draws him into a quiet haven, and finally gathers him to himself. "And he yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

N. T. HINTS.

1. Death:
   Mark 6: 5.
   Acts 5: 10.
   Acts 6: 6.
   2 Pet. 1: 14.
2. Sleep:
   John 11: 11.
3. Israel:
   Rev. 7: 4—8.
   Rev. 21: 12.

Great Pilot on Board (ch. 48: 21). John Owen, two days before he died, thus wrote in a letter to a friend: "I am leaving the ship of the Church in a storm; but whilst the great Pilot is in it, the loss of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable."

Inspiration, faithfulness of. If it could be said of Suetonius that, in writing the lives of the twelve Caesars, *he took the same liberty to set down their faults* that they took to commit them, how much more truly may this be said of the holy penmen, they spared not themselves, much less their friends.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Genesis 50.

Burial of Israel—Death of Joseph—Embalming—Joseph and Christ—N. T. Hints—Ill.

Jacob was honored with a princely burial. Joseph embalms his father and mourns for him according to the custom of the Egyptians. In sending word to Pharaoh, instead of going himself, Joseph follows another custom of the Egyptians. In times of grief and mourning the Egyptians went unshaven. Maspero writes: "During the interval between death and interment, the family pass the long days of waiting in tears and sadness. They take no baths and scarcely wash themselves. They abstain from wines, meat and wheatened bread, living on black bread and water. The men allow the hair and beard to grow, the women abstain from dressing their hair. Twice a day they meet in the mortuary

chamber to weep together." This unshaven condition and other acts of mourning made it impossible for Joseph to present himself before the king.

Joseph presents the request of his father in such a way that an Egyptian would understand, "My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die; in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan there shalt thou bury me." The Egyptians spent money, time and thought upon the preparation of their tomb. Among the first things a king thought of and saw to when he ascended the throne, was his final resting place. To fail to be buried there in the prepared chamber was the greatest of earthly calamities. And so Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Go up and bury thy father according as he made thee swear." And Joseph departs together with the court officers, the servants and the elders of Egypt. They journey by the way of the Dead Sea and entered the land from the east to avoid unpleasant contact with the people of the south country; rendering it necessary therefore to travel over 200 miles. Jacob is thus borne to the tomb of his fathers, the cave of Machpelah, near Hebron. Joseph now, for the first and as far as we know, the only time, revisits the scenes of his boyhood, after an absence of 40 years.

We read that "they mourned with a great and very sore lamentations — and he made a mourning for his father seven days" (vs. 1—10). Maspero tells us of a similar occurrence, "Khait (the widow) and her children walk in front or behind the coffin; then follow the friends of the family, and lastly the crowd of sightseers. The procession passes through the winding streets at the slow pace of the oxen, stopping all traffic, stopping itself upon the slightest pretext. The dead require a noise — sobs and extravagant jestures — sometimes one of the group, sometimes the other,

utter some brief sentiment suitable to the occasion, as for instance, "To the west, the dwelling of Orisis, to the west, thou who wert the best of men, who always hated duplicity."

The life of Joseph is drawing to a close. He passed his aftertime in uninterrupted prosperity. It is probable that Joseph had proved so valuable a servant to Apepi, the Pharaoh of Joseph, that his successors retained him in the office which he held, perhaps to the very close of his life. The benefits he had conferred on Egypt were of the greatest value and importance, and they were not forgotten when he became infirm. "He had been faithful to his king; and not less faithful to his God, and he went into the valley of the shadow of death ladened with the honors of the world and cheered with a smile and approbation of heaven."

Before Joseph died he took an oath of his brethren, saying: "God will surely visit you and ye shall carry my bones from hence" (vs. 24—25). His prosperity had not spoiled him, his faith in God's promise fills his death chamber with glory. Israel accepts the assurance and prepares for the accomplishment of their great brother's request. Joseph closed his life with an act of faith.

Joseph reached the age of 110 years, an age which strangely enough filled to the brim the measure of what according to immemorial tradition in Egypt, constituted earthly felicity. The venerable Ptah-Hotef, the moralist, who lived in the ancient time of the fifth dynasty, says: "I have passed 110 years of life by the gift of the king." Pierret writes, "It is the number of years invariably adopted by the formulary of the inscriptions whenever there is asked of the gods the boon of a long and happy existence." God seems to have crowned Joseph in the sight of all Egypt with his divine approval. "And Joseph died and they embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt." Jacob's body went back to

Canaan to draw his seed thither, Joseph's body remains in Egypt to accompany Israel on their journey.

The act of embalming probably dates back to 2500 B. C. It quickly received a religious significance. Embalming was practiced by many nations. The Persians used wax, the Assyrians honey. Alexander the Great was embalmed in wax and honey. The Egyptians embalmed Joseph by means of spices and drugs of various kinds. Herodotus tells us that relatives enclosed the body of the deceased in a wooden image which they made in the shape of a man. Then, fastening the case, they place it in a sepulchral chamber upright against the wall. Joseph's coffin was no doubt deposited in some sepulchral building and guarded by his own immediate descendants, probably in the house of Ephraim, till the time of the Exodus. Oshum tells us that the mummies in ancient Egypt were heirlooms, highly valued. The fragrant odor emitted by the spices in which they were embalmed, made them welcome inmates in the halls of entertainment, so much so, that the sepulture was often deferred for centuries, so that many successive generations were frequently ranged upright against the walls of the graced hall of entertainment in the family mansion.

There are many parallels between the life of Joseph and that of Jesus. A few are here briefly noted:

1. Joseph the beloved of his father.
   Jesus the beloved of his Father.
2. The brethren conspire to slay Joseph.
   The Jews sought to slay Jesus.
3. Joseph brought from the pit intended for his sepulchre.
   Jesus raised from the dead.
4. Joseph sold by his brethren into Egypt.
   Jesus sold by his disciple to death.

5. Joseph is falsely accused.
   Jesus is falsely accused.
6. Joseph is condemned to prison.
   Jesus is condemned to death.
7. Joseph is imprisoned with two offenders.
   Jesus is crucified with two thieves.
8. According to Joseph's word one prisoner is released.
   By the word of Jesus one thief is promised eternal life.
9. Joseph is elevated to the highest place in the kingdom.
   Jesus arose from the dead and ascended to heaven.
10. Joseph is the saviour of Egypt.
    Jesus is the Saviour of the world.

N. T. HINTS.

Oath:

Luke 1: 73.
Heb. 3: 11—18; 6: 13—17; 7: 21—28.

Burial:

Mark 16: 1.
Luke 7: 12—13.
Acts 8: 2.

ILL.

Death, Preparing for. A mother explained to her little daughter, who could not comprehend her father's death, that God had sent for him, and that by and by he would send for them all — how soon they could not tell. "Well, then, mother," said the child, "if God is going to send for us soon, and we don't know just when, hadn't we better begin to pack up and get ready to go?"

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